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ISSUE 594

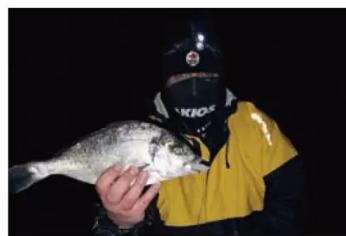
MARCH 2021

BY THE END OF MARCH, IT should be clear if a scientific bluefin tuna research programme involving recreational anglers can take place in the summer/autumn in UK waters.

Some tagging took place during the last two years off the West Country with very limited angler involvement, but now a Government-led project is assessing the viability of a catch, tag and release programme.

The first phase of consultation concluded that, subject to the availability of quota and funding, a small-scale programme working with trained charter boat skippers and run by Cefas, could deliver valuable research. The Angling Trust and Bluefin Tuna UK, who want to establish a sustainable, recreational live-release tuna fishery in the UK, believe a new tagging programme can provide information as to how any future recreational fishery might operate.

Phase two of the consultation is crucial to any decision that in the summer charter boats could be taking anglers out to fish for tuna. The UK has obtained a small allocation (50 tonne) of the EU's quota for Atlantic bluefin tuna, but no decision has been taken by the Government on how to use this, but a public consultation will take place. I imagine the commercial industry will be watching with interest.



RARE CATCHES

In this issue we've got the story of the biggest blue skate caught in the Bristol Channel (see page 26). It was another success for Guntars Zukovski, who you may remember caught the massive 21lb 5oz record-breaking bass last year. Our contributor James Madsen, who wrote the bass story for us, has been on the case again and is hopeful that the skate catch signals their return to the area.

It wasn't the only unusual fish taken recently. On February 11, there was a gilthead bream landed from a beach in Northern Ireland's Causeway Coast region. The 1lb 6oz fish (pictured above), caught by Wojciech Cieszyński on a mackerel and squid bait, is almost certainly the most northerly catch of a gilthead from the shore in Northern Ireland, and follows several from the Waterfoot area within the last four years. Bass are certainly more prolific along the East Antrim coast now, and there have been trigger fish too.

LOCKDOWN

I mentioned last time the efforts of the Angling Trust to ensure the Government allowed angling to remain a permitted activity during Covid-19 lockdown measures. More recently it submitted a detailed case pressing for the removal of travel restrictions, the resumption of charter boat angling, and that overnight fishing and socially distanced matches are allowed when the lockdown is eased. By the time you read this, more may be known.

There is no doubt that many of you are missing competition fishing. As I said last month, some clubs and national organisations have found ways to continue events for individuals, usually in the form of species hunts. I'm told the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Veterans SAC held such an event, which

PORT DISPUTE

As expected, the dispute between Peterhead SAC and oil services company Asco over the right to fish at the port did not end well. A court decided the company could ban anglers from the facility. The decision, following health and safety concerns from Asco, leaves the club with the huge task raising enough cash to fight the ruling.

Finally, thanks for the many positive comments about the magazine recently. They are really appreciated. I hope you enjoy this issue too. You could always take out a subscription to guarantee your delivery and you'll get a Sea Angler beanie hat too (see page 17). You'll be part of the team.

Cliff Brown, editor

HOW TO CONTACT US: EDITORIAL

sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk



Editor Cliff Brown, 01733 353364
Email: cliff.brown@kelsey.co.uk



Contributing Editor
Dave Lewis,
Email: david.lewis21@hotmail.com

Design
Mark Hyde

Thanks to all our other contributors in this issue: Dave Barham, Tony Burman, Alastair Campbell, Chris Clark, Mark Crame, Paul Fenech, Henry Gilbey, John Holden, James Madsen, Wesley Shrubsole, Dan Sissons, Andy Steer, Harley Thompson, Mike Thrussell, Joe Whyte, and Dave Wood-Brignall.

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Talk Media Sales (TMS)

David Lerpiniere, tel: 01732 445326
Email: david@talkmediasales.co.uk

Advert production: Nick Bond, tel: 01732 441281
Email: Nick.bond@talkmediasales.co.uk

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MARKETING

Subscription Marketing Director: Gill Lambert

Retail Director: Steve Brown

Senior Subs Marketing Manager: Nick McIntosh

Affiliate Marketing: Kate Chamberlain

PRODUCTION

Print production/distribution liaison manager:

Georgina Harris, email: georgina.harris@kelsey.co.uk

Print production controller:

Hayley Brown, email: hayley.brown@kelsey.co.uk

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Chief Operating Officer: Phil Weeden
Managing Director: Kevin McCormick

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SHORE ANGLER



Words and
photography by
CHRIS CLARK



A brace of
plaice for
Chris Clark

THE SPICE OF LIFE

While popular for its plaice fishing, Shell Bay is an all-year venue offering plenty of variety...



WHEN IT COMES TO VARIETY of species, few sea angling venues can match Shell Bay on the very eastern tip of the Studland Peninsula on the Isle of Purbeck, but as an added bonus there are fish to be caught throughout the year. While this 800-metre stretch of shoreline provides some superb fishing, a knowledge of local tidal conditions is crucial to maximise your catch rate.

Located on the southern side of the chain ferry slipway at Studland, this is an exceptionally easy venue to locate and there is free roadside parking just past the ferry payment booths or alternatively there is a National Trust car park with a wooden walkway to the beach.

Being east facing, the beach is sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly wind. The venue gets very shallow to the south and, as a result, I favour fishing directly in front of the walkway access point. Again this whole area is extremely popular during the summer months with night

tides recommended during busy periods. There is a very good reason why this relatively shallow, sandy and inconspicuous venue is so productive throughout the yearly cycle. It may be shallow for the first 200 metres but the depth drops away sharply into the main shipping channel heading into Poole Harbour, meaning at night there is a chance of landing some superb fish including conger eels and rays.

During January and February just a few flounders show by day, along with pouting and whiting at night, but by the middle of March plaice start to make their presence felt. Fish topping 3lb are a real possibility. Plaice remain active here until the autumn.

Throughout the summer and early autumn a wide range of species are available. During our trip last September we recorded 10 species including gilthead bream, wrasse, flatties, bass and garfish, but at night virtually anything is on the cards especially at night when congers, rays and hefty smoothhounds can feature. On this occasion we were fishing relatively light in an attempt to see how many species, including plaice, we could record during daylight. ▶



A gilthead added to the species list

TACKLE & TACTICS

Ideally you need an intermediate ebb tide. We were fishing from one hour before high, when the tide slackens, and the first four hours of the ebb. During the flood there is a very strong right to left tidal pull. Weed can be troublesome too, especially on bigger tides, so fishing close along this stretch often enhances your catch rate for smaller species while reducing the risk of weed clogging the baits. We cast out mostly at short range, around 50 metres, just on the edge of the weed bank that extends for the next 100 metres before the drop-off into the channel.

For such close-range fishing our tackle was simple; basically a fairly light rod with good bite detection, a medium size fixed-spool reel loaded with 15lb mono mainline along with a tapered shockleader. The rig was a three-hook paternoster, fished two-up and one-down, with 2ft hooklengths made with 15lb mono. The top snood had a pop-up and a size 6 wormer hook baited with mackerel, while the others were armed with size 4 Kamasan B940M hooks baited with ragworms. When fishing mainly at close range three-ounce plain weights are more than adequate but grip weights are required when casting at range along this stretch of shoreline.

Within a few minutes of casting out, my rod tip was soon nodding when a small pollack took the sliver of mackerel presented on the popped-up hook. Moments later the rod tip showed signs of life again. On this occasion it

10 TOP TIPS FOR CATCHING PLAICE

1 Plaice are usually caught in daylight, particularly when the sky is overcast, but also in bright sunshine.

2 Top places to find them are the corners of beaches, gullies, shallow sandbanks, sandy bays, the edge of weed beds, the line between shingle and sand, mussel beds, clean sand among rough patches, deeper holes in estuaries, and close to harbour mooring chains covered in mussels.

3 Smaller neap tides producing a lighter flow of water are often favoured for plaice fishing in harbours, estuaries and from rock ledges, but on open beaches try rising medium-sized tides running up to bigger springs.

4 If casting distance is required, try a 14-15ft continental rod, rated 4-6oz, and a 7500 fixed-spool reel loaded with 20lb braid and a 60lb shockleader. Otherwise a 12-13ft beach rod will suffice. In harbours or some estuaries, you might be able to use a light bass rod and 5000-sized multiplier loaded with 15lb line and a 25lb shockleader.

5 Two or three-hook flapper rigs with 18-inch hooklengths are ideal for medium range, but for long range go for a clipped version, such as the loop rig, with the hooklengths no longer than 14 inches.

6 A good hook choice is a size 2 or 4 Aberdeen pattern.

7 If you want beads on the hook snoods, a black and green combination works near mussel beds, while orange and green mixture can be used elsewhere.

8 If you struggle for bites, try switching to lighter fluorocarbon hooklengths, say 12-15lb.

9 Besides ragworms, plaice will take lug, mussels and peeler crabs.

10 Fill the shank and bend of the hooks with the bait, making sure the hook point is clear.



was a double shot of small Baillon's wrasse, which was quite a surprise, followed by a nicely marked but small gilthead bream on my next cast. The venue was certainly living up to its fishy reputation.

Shortly after landing that gilthead, my pal Steve Lawrence arrived and promptly beached one of the main target species, a nicely marked plaice, on his first cast. It was not huge but a good average size for this venue. The plaice took a ragworm on a size 4 hook fished below the lead weight. I then had a purple patch and caught a reasonably size ballan wrasse for the area and my first plaice of the evening, which was followed by a double shot of really decent plaice. This venue rarely disappoints.

Only a few minutes after landing the plaice, several school bass put in an appearance and provided some great sport on the light gear. Bass never know when to throw in the towel. While I was having fun with the bass Steve retrieved a tail-walking garfish during dusk, which had taken a small sliver of mackerel on his top hook with a pop-up. It's a great system for catching a few bonus fish.

With the last rays of sunlight disappearing over the horizon I caught a slightly better bass before Steve had a really good bite resulting in a cracking red mullet that tipped the scales to 1lb 2oz, which smashed his club's shore-caught record. Again a ragworm presented on a size 4 hook fished below the weight did the trick. It was a superb-looking fish and really made the evening. With the light rapidly fading we were thinking of making a hasty retreat to catch the last ferry back to Sandbanks but not before we both caught several pouting. On my last cast I caught a sole to underline the venue's genuine potential.

On this occasion we did not catch any large



Steve caught a plaice on his first cast

fish because we had set out to target plaice and to see how many other species we could catch in a few hours. Our tally was 10 species, and that red mullet for Steve was a real bonus. For those heading to this stretch during March and April there is a very good chance of landing some decent plaice. A three-pounder, possibly even a four, is a real possibility as the red spots make their way into Poole Harbour.

Here are three things to remember – ragworms are all you require for these early session red spots; casting within 50 metres of the shoreline here often produces more fish and less weed; and avoid the busy daylight period in summer when the beach becomes crowded with holidaymakers. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

Situated just south of the Sandbanks chain ferry on the Studland side, this is a very easy venue to locate with plenty of free roadside parking.



TACKLE SHOP

■ Swanage Angling Centre, 6 High Street, Swanage, BH19 2NT, tel: 01929 424989.

An advertisement for Sea Angler TACKLE magazine. It features a large image of a plaice fish. Text on the page includes: 'The kit you need for plaice - see page 80', 'THE KIT YOU NEED FOR... PLAICE', 'OLD AND REEL', 'RIGS & BAITS', 'LEAD WEIGHTS', 'BUCKET', and 'TRIPOD'. The magazine cover also shows a man fishing and a close-up of a fishing rod.



DOWN YOUR WAY

ACE FOR PLAICE

These popular flatfish are among a host of species caught from the beaches between Folkestone and Dungeness...

The shingle beach
at Sandgate



THE CURVING EAST-FACING coastline of the Strait of Dover between Folkestone and the huge expanse of shingle at Dungeness has many fishing venues popular throughout the year, with one of the area's highlights being the superb plaice fishing.

The area spans a distance of about 25 miles, starting at Folkestone which grew from a small fishing village once the harbour was constructed in the early part of the 19th century and became an important port. To the west is Hythe featuring the famous Princes Parade match fishing venue, and then you come to the Romney Marsh wetland, which includes the Denge Marsh near Lydd, and the famous fast-flowing water of Dungeness Point.

FOLKESTONE

Starting at the eastern end of Folkestone, the first venue is The Warren, an area of cliffs facing East Wear Bay. The beach here offers mixed ground and the possibility to collect bait, such as blow lug, white ragworms and crabs when in season.

Fishing is from concrete walls and the beach, with access by road as far as the campsite. From there, it is a long walk to some of the known marks but not too far to the first apron. When



Folkestone Warren



The beach at Folkestone Sands

fishing this apron, be aware that on high tides the water will wash over the top so keep tackle well back from the edge.

Summer species here are bass to lures and crab baits, with soles, dabs and dogfish present, along with some smoothhounds and plaice. Winter species are whiting, pout, dabs and always a chance of a codling. You can fish close and at range, with the best time being during a south-west wind. You do get some shelter from the harbour arm, which has been closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

As you look west, the shoreline becomes rockier around to Folkestone sands. This is a shallow venue that is rarely fished other than by local anglers. Bass, flounders and occasional codling are caught.

Past the harbour arm is Folkestone beach, an expanse of shingle approximately one mile long and very underrated. Deep water close in and rocky ground produces bass, wrasse, conger eels and black bream in summer while winter gives bass, dogfish, codling, large pout and conger eels. There are car parks and on street parking available. Fishing is usually best in a south-westerly wind. There is no need for distance casting at this beach.

From the end of Folkestone beach to Sandgate, there are man-made structures and breakwaters that in summer give bass and wrasse to float-fished baits, while broken rock and reefs make up the underwater features. Parking is limited and long walks are necessary. Use peeler crab baits in season. ►

SANDGATE & HYTHE

Sandgate is three miles of steep beach, including the castle and esplanade, with broken ground and a good selection of species in summer and winter. You should get thornback rays, plaice, dabs, bass, silver eels, congers, whiting, pout and codling here. It is worth checking out this venue on a big low tide because you will be able to spot where it changes from very rocky to broken rock the further you go towards Hythe.

At the end of Sandgate esplanade you come to Princes Parade, a well-known venue that hosts large competitions of over 200 anglers. The shingle beach is a mile long with mainly clean ground with the occasional snag. One substantial snag is located left of the white shelter about a quarter of the way along the beach. The other is to the left of the double slipway. Though smaller in size this snag will take end tackle time after time.

Summer species are thornback rays, plaice, mackerel, garfish, eels, whiting and pouting. Winter will see whiting, dogfish, a few rays, dabs, codling and bass. A good blow from the south followed by a northerly wind improves catches here. Shellfish baits can be collected after a big storm.

After this, the Western Parade and Fisherman's Beach off shallower but clean ground and same species. Parking is good at all three venues and is currently free from October until April.

At the end of Fisherman's Beach, you arrive at the Hythe military firing ranges, which extend for about three miles and can only be fished when they are not in use. Times of firing are posted at both ends of the beach. Parking is not good, so expect long walks. There are some white ragworms, lugworms and razorfish collected here on the big low tides.

ROMNEY MARSH

From the end of the ranges there are the shallow, sandy beaches of Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay and New Romney. These produce smoothhounds, bass, flounders and whiting in summer. Beware of the summer crowds, which mean that the best angling is after dark. Some good Dover soles are caught at short range, but big casts get you into the deeper water. It is a good area for finding black lugworms and some shellfish. The water at these beaches always has colour due to the sand and shallow water. The best fishing is during a good surf.

The area from Littlestone to Greatstone provide very similar fishing and bait collecting opportunities, but the water does not start



to deepen until the Lifeboat Station where a good surf can produce bass are in numbers. From this point onwards is the Dungeness estate (closed during the Covid-19 lockdown), where from the Dungeness Lifeboat Station to the fishing boats there is deep water from a steep shelving beach. Tidal flow here is strong on both the ebb and high water. This is probably the last area to catch soles and plaice as beyond this they become quite rare with dogfish, whiting, bass and codling more likely. There are snags but mainly lost tackle and rope. Once past Fisherman's Road, there is parking opposite the locked gate off the estate road. For access through the locked gate and more parking, check out the Dungeness Angling Association website. Further down the estate road and nearer the new lighthouse is the Britannia pub and old lighthouse, where parking is available.

At Dungeness, which is one of the largest expanses of shingle in England, and shelters the low-lying Romney Marsh, you will find the Lighthouse and Point, which features a big tidal flow meaning seven ounce lead weights are the norm. Although this venue seems to be past its glory days, there are still some large fish caught. Parking is available, but expect long walks over the shingle. Behind the power station the water is shallower but strong tides are still evident. Summer species include plaice, smoothhounds, bass and eels. After any good

south-east blow, quantities of shellfish are washed on to these beaches. In winter hordes of whiting make it difficult to keep a bait in the water for very long.

The Diamond and Galloways are the final venues, both being shallow sand and featuring a strong tide. Black lug can be found on big tides. Both venues produce bass during a good surf and were renowned for their sole fishing. It is a long walk to the Diamond, while Galloways has a small car park although you need to cross a firing range so check the shooting times. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE
Folkestone is off the M20, with access on the A259 to the area from Hythe to New Romney, from where the B2075 takes you to Lydd.



TACKLE SHOP

- Folkestone Angling, 12 Tontine St, Folkestone, CT20 1JU, tel: 01303 253881.
- M&M Fishing Tackle, Battery Rd, Lydd-on-Sea, tel: 01797 320789.
- Mick's Tackle, 1 Thirlstone Terrace, Dymchurch Rd, Hythe, CT21 6LB, tel: 01303 266334.
- Seagull Fishing Tackle, 4 The Parade, Greatstone, TN28 8NP, tel: 01797 366837.

Fishing times are limited at the Hythe firing ranges

SHIMANO

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH



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IMAGE

SHIMANO



EASY TACTICS FOR OBLIGING FLATFISH

How to track down the flounders at Humberston Creek, where big fish are caught right now

FOR MOST SEA ANGLERS, THE first fish they catch is probably a flounder. These obliging flatties turn up when other species won't play ball, but how do you increase your chances of catching more of them? One way, and I am being serious, is to go flounder tracking. Let me explain how it's done.

This involves visiting the beach at low water and looking for tell-tale marks in the sand. You may see indentations where these flatfish previously buried themselves in the mud while waiting for food. These features give you an idea where the flounders have been, usually just outside a gully or on a sand bar.

Before one match I went for a walk at the venue to see where the flounders had been on the tide before. I was able to discover where to cast and this information resulted in me catching quite a few fish while other anglers were hurling their bait further than where the fish had been. That is, though, only one step in trying to catch this angler-friendly flattie.

Bait, of course, is very important. In winter when there is reduced crab activity you'll find worms, both lug and rag, often tipped with a sliver of fish, will catch plenty of flounders. Harbour rag (maddies) or small king ragworms can be very good, especially if the fishing is hard going. When the water gets a bit warmer, the crabs get more active and you start to get your bait stripped by them. Now you should remove the fish tip and use only worms to produce more bites and reduce the bait-robbing crab activity. In the summer the best bait will be a crab, with half or a quarter of a peeler the perfect size. On some days a cocktail of crab and maddies can be a winning combination. Feed the maddies up the hook over the shank and let them dangle over the crab bait or whip them into the crab.

Flounders seem to be lazy and just wait in the sand or mud for a meal to come along, so a neat tactic is to annoy them to get a reaction.

Do this by pulling your mainline several times to move the bait slightly. You will see the line go slack, normally until the tidal movement tightens it up again or your rod tip moves as another fish is tricked by the movement and takes the bait. When using a two or three-hook rig and trying to catch more than one fish after a first bite, just give the mainline a quick tug which can sometimes result in another fish. This ploy can make all the difference when match fishing.

TACKLE & BAIT

I put this into practice in January in the middle of the Covid-19 lockdown at a local mark in North Lincolnshire. My friend Jack Barlow and I decided to try the creek at Humberston, where the biggest flatties are caught between January and March. Humberston Creek is at the seaward point of the Louth Canal, which runs for 11 miles from Louth to Tetney Haven at the mouth of the Humber, where the RSPB Tetney Marshes ▶

GREAT SEA ANGLING VENUES
Your insight
into the best shore
and boat fishing
that the UK
and Ireland
have to offer



Bait consisted of bluey, rag and lug



Fishing from the
bottom of the steps



Double shots were commonplace as the tide ebbed



A flounder for
Jack Barlow



Another flounder
hits the sand

Nature Reserve and Humber Mouth Yacht Club are located. This is a few minutes' drive from our homes.

The tidal height was possibly a little big for the venue, but with the weather apparently getting worse later in the week it was decided to go while it was still fine. We fished towards the mouth of the creek (the Cleethorpes end). To ensure social distancing, I fished from the top on the grass, while Jack got to the bottom of the steps and fished on the concrete plinth. We started fishing at high tide and there was little run so a three ounce pyramid weight was fine.

For flounder fishing I use a continental rod and smaller fixed-spool reel loaded with braid and a tapered mono leader. I find the braid is ideal at the creek, especially if the tide is running. If I am fishing further down the river, I use monofilament line. My rig was a simple two-hook job with the main body consisting of 40lb Drennan Greased Weasel, which is ample for a lead weight of four ounces or less. For the top hooklength, I use a Tronixpro Quick Rig (consisting of a rubber stop, two clear beds and a swivel trapped between them and another rubber stop) with the bottom snood a free-running affair (the line going through the lead link swivel followed by a bead and tied to a small swivel, to which I attach good length of 12lb fluorocarbon line). I prefer fluorocarbon line for my hooklengths because it does not stretch as much and tends not to twist. While I avoid bling on my hooklengths, other anglers favour beads, sequins or other types of bait stops. There is no need for the rig to be a



Use light tackle for catching flounders

clipped-down version because you are not casting far at this venue. Our bait selection was lug, rag, and bluey, so the hooks were Kamasan B940M Aberdeen Match in size 4.

PLENTY OF BITES

Jack had the first bite and missed it, but soon my rod was bouncing around and the first fish was soon lifted up the side of the wall. It was a smaller one of around 28cm but it was a start. Next Jack was into a fish again. His rod was bending nicely and then, just as he was about to bring the fish in, the rod tip lunged and bent heavily into something before springing back. A seal then appeared. The flounder escaped, just!

By only casting 30 to 40 yards into the deeper parts of the creek, I was getting a fish on most casts; what I call steady fishing. Then about two hours after high tide the water started to go out of the creek and the flow increased to create a bit of run. This resulted in more bites, at a quicker pace and they were certainly more positive. The flounders were also bigger, the

best just under 40cm, but instead of getting single fish we were getting double shots on most casts. When using lighter rods it certainly makes the rod bend when you hook two decent flounders. Often we would cast out and not even have chance to re-bait before the rod tip was bouncing all over the place as the braid indicated every movement.

On some occasions the tide can be quite strong, which is why Jack favours a light grip weight to slow the movement of the rig. You also find that the fish hook themselves. I always take a variety of plain and grip leads in different shapes and sizes from one ounce to five. I know some anglers even go to six ounces when the tide run is at its worse. I find casting up the tide helps. You will feel the lead weight trundling along and then suddenly the tip springs into action and another fish is hooked.

After about three hours of fishing we decided to call it a day. We both landed more than 20 fish, which was a very good session. The creek fishes well for most of the year but the best times are January, February and then the summer. If you get a chance, have a look at low water and you will see where to cast. If you fish too far out you will be out of the creek and on the sandbanks. The lower height tides are best, in fact the lower the better. On this session we fished the tide going down but last year a few of the matches I fished here were from three hours up to high water and one down.

In summer while you are fishing for flatfish, you will also get occasional bass. Anglers fishing for bass here last year caught them up to 7lb. One angler, Andrew Hutson, decided to fly-fish into the creek off one of the sandbanks and had great fun with the bass. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

To get to the creek, head along Anthony's Bank Road towards Thorpe Park Holiday Centre in Humberston (DN35 0PW). Go past the site and you will see a car park on the left-hand side (be aware that this could be closed during Covid restrictions). Alternatively, drive to the Humberston Fifties where you will see several walkways off the road leading to Fifties Beach and the creek. Please park sensibly and do not block access for the residents.



TACKLE SHOP

■ Anglers and Danglers, 96 Haycroft Avenue, Grimsby, DN31 2DP, tel: 07758 12131.
■ Trading Post, 141 Hainton Avenue, Grimsby, DN32 9LF, tel: 01472 345376.

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PART THREE



BAIT BOX

How, where & when

THE FISH FANTASTIC

Mackerel, bluey, sandeels and squid are the mainstay of many anglers' bait selection

MACKEREL

Over the full 12-month calendar year, mackerel is probably the most consistent sea angling bait used nationwide. Some anglers choose to catch and freeze their own, though blast frozen mackerel is available in most tackle shops all year.



Mackerel is a versatile and popular bait

Its universal success is due to the high oil content that emits a steady stream of food scent into the tide. It also appeals to both predatory fish and to scavengers. Mackerel is taken by fish in almost every fishing situation you can think of, ranging from legering over rough ground to float fishing off a man-made structure and all boat fishing situations from flatfish to sharks. If you're new to sea fishing and not sure which bait to try, then this is a good starting point.

SEASON

As a bait, it works for the whole year but the mackerel shoals move inshore in April and stay until October generally, so the inshore fish are accustomed to feeding on mackerel during these peak months. However, due to that high oil content, it is also very effective in winter in both gin-clear seas and when the sea is carrying colour after rough weather.



SPECIES

Mackerel baits fished from the shore will consistently take all the rays, along with tope, bream, bull huss, pollack, conger eels, bass, flounders, dabs, garfish, mullet, dogfish, trigger fish, whiting and a host of mini species such as the tiny wrasse, sea scorpions, shannies and tompot blennies.

Offshore, this bait is equally successful catching almost everything out there, including brill and turbot, sharks, common skate, conger eels, all the rays, bull huss, wrasse, pollack, coalfish, cod, haddock, ling, whiting and dabs, as well as the rarer species such as stone bass, megrim and hake.



Use a craft knife to create the thin strips

SIMPLE STORAGE

If you decide to catch your own, then you need to take a cool box with you. As you feather them up, place them straight in the cool box, ideally either on ice packs, or loose ice. Keeping fresh mackerel cold is vital to their freshness prior to freezing. When you get home, wash them in clean tap water, dry them on kitchen roll, put them in pairs into fully sealable bags, remove as much air as you can, then seal the bag and place them straight into the freezer. The time lapse between catching and freezing needs to be minimal for the best results.

For short-session fishing frozen mackerel can be carried in a small cool box with a single ice pack. This will keep them frozen for most of even a hot day if the cool box is a good make. For longer trips, if you can't replace your bait from a shop on a daily basis, then use a bigger cool box with ice on the bottom, a layer of frozen mackerel, another layer of ice or ice packs and so on until the box is full. This will store for two to three days if you keep the box out of the sun. In both cases put what is not being used immediately back into the box to keep it fresh.

You can also buy fairly fresh mackerel from some supermarkets and fish shops. What you need to look for is that the eye is fresh and clear, the gills are bright red, and, most of all, the fish smells of the sea. If the fish has lost its colour and gone grey, if the eyes are dull and opaque and it smells literally of fish, it is past its best. The fresher the fish is, the better it will fish in most circumstances.

PRESENTATION

For smaller species when fishing from boat and shore, thin strips, the white belly being best, cut between one inch and three inches long and no more than a half an inch wide covers many options. Pass the hook point and hook through from the flesh side once to allow the strip to fish lengthways. This presents the strip naturally whether you're shore leger fishing or boat drift fishing.

For casting, take the hook fully through from the skin side and bring it back through from the flesh side at the base of the bait. Use thin baiting elastic and wrap the mackerel into a neat thin shape leaving a small flap to move freely below the hook.

For bigger predators like rays, huss and congers, a three- to four-inch length of fillet with the hook passed fully through from the skin side, then back through from the flesh side at the base sees the hook support the fillet, which is then wrapped securely with bait elastic for casting. Half-body sections or whole heads work well for bigger conger eels when fishing breakwaters and from rock ledges into deep water, and also for big bass.

BLUEY

This is the Pacific saury and looks like a heavy garfish. It was originally imported as a long-line bait into Norway and Iceland and was consequently recognised as a successful rod and line bait. Now popular here in the UK, it is called bluey due to its colour.

It is an extremely oily fish that seems to take longer to wash out than mackerel baits of a similar size. Bluey is readily available as a frozen bait in most good tackle shops throughout the year. It is not as versatile in the species it will catch as mackerel, but it is effective for bigger predators.

SEASON

Another bait that will catch fish during any month of the year, it is very effective in areas where there is some tide run due to its ability to give off scent for longer. As the scent spreads further, it allows more ground to be covered and induces fish in from further afield than mackerel, making it very effective in coloured seas during the winter.

SPECIES

Bluey is more selective in what it catches than mackerel and less effective at catching smaller species, but will take dabs, whiting and the occasional flounder. It is more consistent for rays, congers, bull huss, ling and spurdogs, both from the shore and boat. It is also one fish bait that will take cod, especially when shore fishing in Norway or Iceland, but also in the UK.



Stitch the hook through a body section



A large bluey bait engulfed by a cod



Use a Pennell rig for big baits

SIMPLE STORAGE

You are buying it frozen, so for short-session fishing keep it in a cool box with ice packs and take out only what you need for immediate use. Even when buying from a tackle shop for your freezer, take your cool box to keep it fully frozen during the journey home.

PRESENTATION

It works in small strips or as third or half fillets wrapped in a few turns of bait elastic if you're targeting smaller fish. For bigger rays, congers and huss, cut a body section between three and four inches long. Pass the hook in through the top of the bait and bring the hook fully in and out stitching style until the hook point exits from the base of the bait. Now wrap well with bait elastic to secure it to the hook for casting.



A bluey bait ready for casting



Bluey and lug make a good combination



A sandeel
rigged for
float fishing

SANDEELS

Sandeels are a staple part of the diet for a great number of fish resident both inshore and offshore. They are common throughout the UK waters and readily available as a frozen bait in most tackle shops and sometimes as a live bait. The largest is the launce sandeel growing to at least 10 inches and more, with several smaller species being found inshore averaging three to six inches in length.

It is one of our most versatile baits for legering, float fishing or when worked slowly through the water on spinning gear.

SEASON

Its natural season is from April to October when it forms small to large shoals and is common both inshore and offshore, especially in estuaries and over inshore reef systems. This bait will catch fish all year but can become area sensitive in the winter, being good in one place and less so in another. It is most effective over clean sand, but bigger launce can be very good over rough ground, too.



Make sure the hook
point is left clear

SPECIES

Using a sandeel from the shore is excellent for small-eyed and spotted rays, bull huss, pollack, coalfish and bass, and in small strips for smaller species such as turbot, flounders, dabs and school bass.

Offshore, launce will take most bottom-feeding species including wrasse, cod, ling, pollack, coalfish, haddock, as well as bull huss, rays, turbot, plaice and brill.

SIMPLE STORAGE

Live sandeels can be put in fresh sea water with an aerator to keep them oxygenated. This will keep them alive for a few hours, but there will be constant losses. Alternatively, put ice packs in the bottom of a cool box, add a thickly layered cloth dampened with sea water over the top of the ice to insulate the sandeels, place the sandeels on this and add another sea-dampened cloth over the top of the sandeels. Retaining them very cold and damp lengthens the time you can keep them fresh and lively.

To freeze fresh sandeels, place them in sealable bags or use a vacuum sealer. Put them in suitable numbers for single sessions and get them as fast as possible into the freezer. Removing all the air helps avoid freezer burn.

For short-session fishing, frozen sandeels need to be kept in either a good insulated bait wallet, or better still, a proper cool box with ice packs added. Again, only remove what you need immediately and keep the wallet or box in a cool shady place. The eels will stay frozen in a cool box for days with good ice packs during prolonged trips.



A sandeel with the head and tail removed

PRESENTATION

For smaller species, you can fillet smaller sandeels. Use these little fillets on smaller size 6 or 4 hooks by passing the hook once through from the flesh side, which presents a moving strip that imitates a small fish. Otherwise, cut body sections about an inch to two inches long and feed the hook down through from the top and bring it out near the base of the bait, then bind with bait elastic to add casting strength.

A whole sandeel is best used with the head and tail fin removed. Pass the hook in through the tail end and slide the sandeel round the bend and up the hook shank to leave it vertical on the hook with the point exiting at the head end. Again, add a few turns of bait elastic to secure. You can bulk up this bait by adding another sandeel as a splint alongside the first.

Bigger sandeels should be cut into body sections two to four-inches long with the hook passed down the length of the bait to leave the hook point clear, with bait elastic added.

For float fishing with a whole small sandeel, pass the hook through the nose or mouth, bringing the hook through, and nick the hook in and out of the flank about midway down the body to leave the hook point clear.

SQUID

A highly effective bait over the full calendar year, it is readily available in most tackle shops, but also from fish markets, wet fish shops and even some supermarkets. It is sold frozen in packs for short sessions, and in 1lb and 5lb boxes. In real terms it is a relatively cheap bait that no angler should be without.

There are several types. Bleached Californian squid for the domestic market, which is the commonest, unwashed squid which is said to carry more scent, and small Japonica squid, individual squid little more than two inches or so long. They all work very well.

SEASON

There seems little scent from a squid, but the fish have no trouble finding it. It works throughout the year. The Californian squid is white with the skin removed and is easily seen in clear water, but in coloured seas there is ample scent for predators to follow the scent trail all the way to the bait. The smaller Japonica squid is much the same. The unwashed squid has more scent and works well at night and in coloured seas.

If a squid looks pink in the flesh, then it is far from fresh, and though it will still catch fish it is not likely to be as effective as a fresh one.

SPECIES

A good bait in smaller strips for dabs, dogfish, bream, whiting and gurnards, also smaller wrasse such as cuckoo and corkwings. It really comes into its own when used as a bigger bait and targets huss, congers, cod, bass, rays, spurdogs, ling and smoothhounds.

SIMPLE STORAGE

Frozen packs of squid keep for a year or more in the freezer. The 1lb and 5lb packs though, need to be initially semi-thawed to split the squid. Place three squid into a sealable or vacuum-packed bag, and then re-freeze until needed.

For short and long sessions, put the frozen squid into a cool box with ice packs and keep the box cool. They will keep for several days like this if not constantly opened. For short-session fishing, again use small ice packs and keep the squid in an insulated wallet or a small cool box and as always, only take out what is needed right away.

PRESENTATION

To cut small neat strips of squid, say from an inch to three or four inches, remove the head and slice the body of the squid up the full length to open it like a book. Remove the guts and the backbone. Using the edge of a knife, scrape the thin skin off the squid to leave a flat white body section, which can

Remove the number you need for a session



Whole squid can be fished on a Pennell rig



Put the squid and an ice pack in a cool box



Secure the bait with elastic for casting

be cut neatly and thinly to imitate small fish. Pass the hook through the bait once at one end to maximise movement.

Half-body sections can be pushed round the hook and secured with bait elastic. However, if you leave the head dangling when using a whole squid, fish like bass, congers, rays and huss can nip off the head and miss the hook. To avoid this, pass the hook into the top of the squid's body then push the squid down and round the bend of the hook and fully up the shank so that the hook exits at the base of the body. Now bend the head back to lay alongside the body and bind it with bait elastic.

Bigger squid (over four inches long) are best fished on a two-hook Pennell rig with the top hook nicked into the upper end of the body. ■



At 14lb-plus,
it was a
personal best

Q

NE OF SCOTLAND'S BEST cod anglers in recent times is Peter Lee, originally from Hong Kong and now a restaurateur in Paisley, where he runs his family business, the highly-regarded and long-standing Kwang Tung.

He learned his fishing skills from some of the leading cod fishers on the east coast of Scotland – people like Rab Gallagher, Stewart Falconer and Paul Mottram. He is carrying on the tradition himself and passing on some of his hard-earned tips and knowledge to a small and select band of 'students' who are learning the ropes from an angler and mentor who for over two decades has put in the miles, the hours, the research and (only very occasionally) the blank sessions to gain a wealth of expert knowledge.

In November Peter bagged a personal best cod of 14lb-plus cod on a trip to Arbroath where he does much of his fishing. Like many top rods, Pete will help out anyone with advice, but, like many successful anglers, don't expect him to put you on a spot that will produce. He's spent years perfecting his skills and know-how and some of these marks are closely guarded to prevent the nonsense of litter and over-fishing.

Pete is as passionate about food and cooking as he is about hunting the big fish. An afternoon spent with Pete will see him produce his home baking and talk you through some of his favourite recipes. As a chef with a reputation as high as his own, he will have you salivating at the prospect of salt and chilli cod or steamed bass with ginger. Passing a couple of hours with Pete is always a pleasure.

Q *Tell me about that personal best cod.*

PL: Oh, what a fish! I was north of Arbroath, on my own, just three days after my dad (the much-loved Man Choy Lee) had passed away. I wanted to get out and clear my head and get my thoughts together over what had happened. I had moved over a couple of different marks, and eventually got to the last spot. Before this I'd bagged a couple of wee ones so I just said to myself, 'Last shot here', and stuck on a huge bait, a peeler and a cart wing, and whacked it out. I was ready for home. Five minutes later I was rewarded with a nice eight-pounder. I messaged Denise (his wife) to get ready, dinner is served and had final chuck with two peelers and a cart wing.

Two minutes later, the rod doubles over, the tripod is on the ground which I was thankfully near, maybe five metres, as I'd moved my gear back with the flooding tide. I grabbed the rod, which was bent right over, felt that the fish was on and I'm pumping it off the seabed. That's one of the main things, always get the fish into mid-water if you can and then take your time,

Welcome to the world of COD ACE PETER LEE

Having learned his cod fishing skills from some of the very best in Scotland, this angler and culinary wizard is carrying on the tradition by passing on his hard-earned knowledge...



Two cod of 14lb and 8lb in one session

playing it and pumping it in. I knew it was a good fish, but I had no idea how big. I get it in, close to the shore, and back off the drag and watch the swell, using the swell to put the fish on to a rock ledge. A lot of people will lose big fish right at the last minute. When the swell pulls the fish down, you can't match that quick enough and the fish is left dangling. You've got to back off the drag – the sea will always be a winner.

I watched the swell for the right moment and popped the fish on to a rock and I just dragged it up to my stance. Holy moly! I knew it was a big fish but my scales weren't working. I took it up to a friend's place (Paul Mottram – more of him later – and he weighed it, 14lb, bang, new PB!

Q What was your previous best?

PL: My best fish before this was a 12-pounder. I was out fishing with (local legend) Rab Gallagher and we were on another mark which I'd never fished before and I fished this particular gully. Like any good teacher, Rab had put me on the prime spot and after three casts into the gully I'd had two doubles, a ten and then a twelve and then we were off. Quite a feat, three casts and two doubles.

Q It's not that easy at the time though, is it?

PL: A lot of less-experienced anglers would panic knowing that they were into a good fish and are in too much of a hurry to retrieve it. Always take your time, because with cod, they aren't going to run. As long as you hold it and it is well hooked, it's not going to come off. The last bit, the critical point, is when it's near the shore. Always try and use the swell to bring in the fish. Of course, my heart was racing, but it's important to try and slow it down.

Q Tell me about some of the people you've been helping out.

PL: I have been mentoring a new angler, Ryan Pringle, who only started fishing for cod in September. He'd been out a



few times with other people and didn't do too well but I thought, this is a nice bloke, he deserves a chance, just like me. Other people took me under their wing and taught me and I'm really grateful for that.

I took Ryan out a couple of nights, walking different marks, gave him some ideas about what to do and why we do them and I tried to explain why he should cast in a certain direction, what the lie of the seabed is and why gullies and features are important. I always think it's important to realise how cod feed in the gullies and alleyways between rocks. Paul Mottram who mentored me explained that, like a person walking round obstacles rather than through them, a cod will do the same. You need to have your bait in a clear alleyway that the cod will visit.

On one of those trips, Ryan got a 2lb codling and was over the moon. His next was 4lb 7oz and he was made up. I caught nothing, but the joy was putting a new angler into some fish. I passed on some tips and he's got a new PB, a new friendship and is grateful for the chance.

Note: Since then, Ryan beat his PB with another Pete-inspired nine-pounder. ►

Q How did you get interested in sea fishing?

PL: A couple of close friends from Paisley fished the east coast and one of them showed me a 3lb fish and I was amazed. This led to me going fishing with a few guys, in particular David Lettham who was the one who really put me on the path that I'm on now. Through him I met Stewart Falconer and you could not meet a better guy; he's been really helpful to me and others over the years. When I introduced him to Ryan he said: 'Yeah, Pete, over to you to do the teaching now.'

As regards teaching people, I always say to the guys that I've been mentoring that every time you go out you will learn something – conditions and times to fish certain marks. It's like a big jigsaw puzzle and you have to piece it together sometimes to find out how an area fishes on a certain day and weather. You have to be on the right mark, at the right time with the right swell, but, of course, sometimes the fish confound you by doing the opposite of what you think. It's that particular day, the bait you use, the conditions. It's quite basic really but at the same time also very hard to understand.

It's always good to try and think like a fish. If things aren't working and the bites aren't there, try and think where the fish would be; maybe coloured water in a big sea but in a calm area. You need to remember if the sea is raging, a cod won't sit there as it is expending energy; it'll sit in a back eddy where food will collect, where feeding is easy, rather than chasing a meal in white water. I've approached marks that have produced before but have looked at the swell and thought that won't fish despite the good conditions. Sometimes it doesn't work like that! It's important to analyse the mark and move if need be. There's no point persevering with a spot that won't fish, even if you've caught there at other times.

Q Do you keep notes or a diary of previous trips?

PL: Some of the guys who mentored me would tell me to keep a diary but I have never actually done it as I think fishing now is different from even 10, 15 years ago. I wish I had the knowledge I have now when I started because there were more fish about then, but, you know, it's all a learning curve. A diary would be handy but I don't think it's the be-all and end-all. I think having a good knowledge of things like moon phases, wind and swell direction and even air pressure play a huge part in being successful or not. I always try to be safety conscious too; I've had a couple of close ones but once you've had a fright you battle on, move to another mark or go home. I prefer fishing with friends but I do fish alone a fair bit."



Looks good, Peter's salt and chilli cod

Q Do you enjoy any other types of fishing?

PL: I like trout fishing in the summer, with a pal of mine called Bill Greer. He's retired now but has fished all of his life, well before my time. He'd stopped for about a decade as he had his own business but first time back, after a lot of encouragement, he fished the Lake of Montieth and when that first fish took his fly, that was him hooked again completely. It's hard to explain to people what fishing does to us, the rush, the pleasure, the buzz. In the current climate, it's a great thing for the state of mind. Coronavirus has taken quite a toll on people's mental health and it's a great thing for the mind. I mean, golf, music, whatever, but it's fishing for me.

Q Are you a fan of expensive fishing tackle?

PL: I'm not what I would call well-off but, like all anglers, I do like a good quality rod. In recent weeks I've been using older rods again and it was good to get a feel for what I enjoyed about them. Yeah, the latest and greatest are great but sometimes the tool for the job is all you need. For cod fishing, you obviously want a rod with a bit of beef in it. The reel and end tackle and knowledge are much more important than the latest rod. You don't need a tournament rod because it's not huge casting for cod fishing most of the time; it's 40, 50-yard chucks and you need a rod that will lift the fish off the deck and cope with rough ground.

Q What are your thoughts about bait choice?

PL: I think bait has changed a lot over the years. For a long time peeler crab was the thing and now cart seems to be the choice for lots of guys. All baits have their days. You have to look at and learn from the marks. A beach will generally fish better using worm-based cocktail baits and a rocky mark better with crab, cart or mussels. If you think about it, what is the natural food that will be there? I'll go out with four or five different baits; you don't need a huge selection. It's what works on the day at that mark.

Another little trick I sometimes use, particularly with squid, is to stand on the bait before casting. This breaks it up a bit and microscopic pieces will wash into the tide creating a scent trail. I don't think there's a great difference between fresh or frozen bait for cod fishing. One of the younger guys that I've been mentoring was adamant that he had to dig fresh lug every trip from the opposite coast to where we were fishing but I think that frozen black lug works as well if not better. It seems crazy to me; maybe if you are match fishing, yes, fresh all day long, but hunting cod, they are not that fussy. As long as the bait is fresh enough, it'll work. As long as it's good quality, frozen is fine.

I once found a pebble in a cod's stomach, which shows that they are sucking up everything when are on the feed. I've had octopus, prawns and small fish like blennies in cod stomachs before. I've had a few with rigs attached after some angler has lost it and I've caught it a few days or hours later.

Q Tell us a little about coming to Scotland and the Kwang Tung.

PL: My parents, me and my three siblings moved over in 1980; I'd have been seven. Yes, I know I've got a pretty thick Scottish accent now. The Kwang Tung restaurant and takeaway, which has been closed throughout the pandemic, has been there since the mid-sixties after my uncle came over from Hong Kong. The world had really opened up at that point and people had moved to Canada, Australia and the USA. My uncle needed sponsors to come to the UK and my dad acted as sponsor.

From about 14, I started working in the restaurant after school and eventually went full-time. It's a family-run place and has really boomed. We are all really close-knit; my staff are like family, too.

Q You seem very passionate about food and cooking. Do you have any recipe tips?

PL: Sometimes the experimental things are the best when cooking. Since lockdown, I've been learning about baking. It's always great to learn new things. We'd tried salt and chilli with various foods but trying it with fish, wow, brilliant! Cooking with a bit of fragrance, flavour and a wee bit of inspiration can be really exciting.

Steamed bass Chinese style is a favourite of mine. It's out of this world. A little bit of ginger, spring onions and a touch of chilli; steamed on top of a wok, on a plate, you'll know when it's ready as the flesh is falling off a fork. I like to keep the heat on briefly, then top it off with light soy sauce and the last part, and most critical, is dressing the fish with hot oil; it sizzles over the meat and the ginger and other flavours really jump out. It's a traditional Chinese way of cooking a whole fish and it is delicious. I'm not a regular bass angler though, but I've had a bit of success, again fishing with guys who know their way around the marks. ■



Peter stresses the need for fresh bait



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Words by
James
MadsenPhotography
by Guntars
Zukovski

Hope for the future

Does bass ace's common skate signal a comeback in the Bristol Channel?



Guntars 'Gruu' Zukovski with Britain's biggest bass of 21lb 5oz

Nowadays, anglers fishing the lochs in Scotland target common skate from both boat and shore. There have been some amazing captures, particularly from the shore with skate in excess of 200lb recorded. Scotland it seems isn't the only place they can be caught. For back in December, Jamie Steward, from North Devon, landed an 8lb 5oz common skate and won the Bristol Channel fish of the month online competition. Imagine the surprise of the organisers only three weeks later when another common skate was landed from the shores of the Bristol Channel, this time by Guntars Zukovski,

who is originally from Latvia and now lives in Bridgwater, Somerset. One superb fish is a fluke perhaps, but two?

SPECIMEN SESSION

Guntars, known as Gruu, decided to head out for another one of his regular fishing sessions on the reefs around Somerset. Having lived in the UK for 10 years, he has been a sea angler for the last six. On this occasion he finished work at 2am and aimed to wet his first line at around 3.15am. Low tide was at 6.15am and the plan was to fish three hours down to low water and one hour back up on the flooding tide.

Since Christmas, fishing had been particularly tough for everyone in this area of the Bristol Channel, and Guntars admitted his many hours of fishing in January had produced very little reward. The slump came after a good spell in December, most notably catching two fine cod, with the biggest hitting the scales at a new personal best weight of 11lb 2oz. It is nights like that which kept him motivated,



A welcome arrival in the Bristol Channel

even during all the other fishless sessions in the colder winter months.

Guntars classes himself as a specimen hunter these days and he doesn't mess about with small baits very often. You may remember he caught the giant bass on a whole mackerel bait and in this session he used big double-squid baits (see page 60) presented on a Pennell pulley rig with size 7/0 hooks. He was casting these baits out to a good distance, using his Century Fireblade rod and Penn 525 Casting Special multiplier loaded with 25lb monofilament line. To cope with the fierce tidal rise and fall in this area, 6-7oz grip weights are recommended in order to keep bait nailed on the seabed.

SURPRISE FISH

Two hours passed without a bite and then at around 5.15am, one hour before low tide, Guntars noticed some movement on his rod. A very slow and solid pull down on his rod tip got him excited. He waited, the tip came back up slowly and then went back down again in similar fashion. The current





Jamie Steward's 8lb 5oz common skate

had slackened at this point so there was no slack line and the tip kept going over on the second bite. He grabbed the rod, steadily leaned into the fish and began to wind his reel handle.

The fish didn't put up any fight and Guntars described the retrieve as winding in a dead weight. Most disappointingly, the fish didn't even kite from side to side as it got closer into the shoreline. At first glance he thought it was a big thornback ray and was understandably shocked when he saw otherwise.

He had seen photographs of Daniel Stewart's common skate caught in December, so once his fish came into clear sight he knew straight away what he'd caught and couldn't believe his luck. By this point he had a beaming smile and was extremely excited to see a common skate on the rocks before him.

Guntars cares about the wellbeing of all the fish he catches, so he rested



the skate in a deep rock pool before weighing it and taking photographs. Interestingly, while recovering the skate regurgitated its dinner, consisting of four whiting and a small codling. It certainly hadn't been going hungry. As is so often the case with many specimen hunters, especially those who are out in the middle of winter at stupid o'clock, Guntars was again fishing alone. He did his best to take a couple of selfies on his mobile and then took a video of him weighing the skate before its release. She weighed in at 15lb 3oz and that's the biggest common skate I've seen recorded in the Bristol Channel so far this century.

SPECIES INCREASE

Up to this point in time, no-one would admit to targeting common skate in the Bristol Channel, but now we have seen two caught from the shore in quick succession the mind does start to wonder. Will we see a revival with this species of skate? Only time will tell but some people may say it's extremely unlikely due to general commercial pressure on fish stocks. There is some hope, especially when you look at some of the closures of commercial fisheries in the Bristol Channel and how that has made a massive difference to some of the fish populations. The general amount of rays has increased since the closure of the commercial fisheries in Devon. In addition, most anglers now practice a really good catch and release policy. It's worth noting the increasing number of blonde rays caught from the Bristol Channel coasts of England and Wales, which has been mind blowing. Perhaps we'll see a few more being caught in the huge waterway very soon. ■

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

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Harrison Catania, Newport, Isle of Wight.
FISH: 3lb 4oz flounder. **BAIT:** Ragworms on two-hook flapper rig. **VENUE:** River Medina.
DATE: January 27



Paul Castle, Southsea, Hampshire.
FISH: 22lb 4oz spurdog. **BAIT:** Mackerel flapper on a flowing trace.
VENUE: 30 miles off Portsmouth.
DATE: February 6



Brad Chapman, Guisborough, North Yorkshire. **FISH:** 11lb 2oz cod.
BAIT: Lug and black lug on a Pennell pulley rig.
VENUE: Runswick Bay.
DATE: January 22



Peter Dudgeon, Romsey, Hampshire.
FISH: 65lb conger eel. **BAIT:** Squid.
VENUE: Private boat out of Gosport.
DATE: January 23



MONTHLY WINNERS:
SHORE: Harrison Catania, Newport, 3-4 flounder.
BOAT: Paul Castle, 22lb 4oz spurdog



Maty Leigh, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear.
FISH: 14lb cod. **BAIT:** Cart wing on a pulley rig.
VENUE: Seaham, County Durham.
DATE: January 24



Tyler Wild, Durham, County Durham.
FISH: 7lb 2oz cod. **BAIT:** Yellowtail lug and cart.
VENUE: Tynemouth pier, Tyne & Wear.
DATE: January 23



Cameron Holmes, Skelton-in-Cleveland, North Yorkshire. **FISH:** 7lb 3oz cod. **BAIT:** Black lug and blow lug on Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** Runswick Bay, North Yorkshire. **DATE:** January 24



David Mcrorie, Newcastle, Tyne & Wear.
FISH: 14lb 4oz cod. **BAIT:** Squid and razorfish on a pulley rig. **VENUE:** Northumberland.
DATE: January 29



Marc Boggust, Poole, Dorset.
FISH: 2lb+ plaice. **BAIT:** Frozen black lugworm on up and over rig. **VENUE:** Sandbanks, Poole, Dorset. **DATE:** January 28



Mikey Mellor, Guisborough, North Yorkshire.
FISH: 7lb 7oz cod. **BAIT:** Cart wing and squid on Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** Staithes area.
DATE: January 28



Craig Everett, Holyhead, Anglesey.
FISH: Double-figure bull huss. **BAIT:** Mackerel on a conger rig. **VENUE:** Holyhead.
DATE: February 5



Robert Baillie, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries & Galloway. **FISH:** 10lb 15oz thornback ray.
BAIT: Bluey and squid on Pennell pulley rig.
VENUE: Dumfries & Galloway. **DATE:** January 24



Warwick Salzer, Weymouth, Dorset.

FISH: 3lb 11oz flounder. **BAIT:** Frozen crab on a running leger. **VENUE:** Moored boat in Weymouth harbour. **DATE:** January 27



Wayne Lord, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries & Galloway. FISH: 11lb 6oz 8dr thornback ray.

BAIT: Bluey and squid on a drop-down pulley rig. **VENUE:** Balcary. **DATE:** January 24



Barry Chambers, Plymouth, Devon. FISH: 2lb 4oz 8dr flounder. **BAIT:** Ragworm on running leger. **VENUE:** Private boat in River Tamar. **DATE:** January 4

TARGET HITTERS!

MONTHLY WINNERS:

BASS SHORE

■ Nathan Francis, Llanelli, 8-0+*, Cold Knap, Nov 22

BULL HUSS

■ Craig Everett, Holyhead, 10lb+*, Holyhead, Feb 5

COD SHORE

■ Brad Chapman, Guisborough, 11-2, Runswick Bay, Jan 22
 ■ Cameron Holmes, Skelton, 7-3, Runswick Bay, Jan 24
 ■ Tom Jenkinson, Brae, 23-0*, Hellister, Feb 13
 ■ Matty Leigh, Sunderland, 14-0, Seaham, Jan 23
 ■ Alastair McDonald, Cleaton, 9-0, South Shields pier, Feb 9
 ■ John McQueen, Nafferton Farm, 9-4, Northumberland, Feb 3
 ■ Cam Milne, Arbroath, 8-14, Arbroath harbour, Feb 8.
 ■ Mikey Mellor, Guisborough,

FLATFISH BOAT

■ Scott Patterson, Edinburgh, 7-8, East Lothian, Feb 8
 ■ Tyler Wild, Durham, 7-2, Tynemouth pier, Jan 23
 ■ Darren Willemars, Rattray, 12-0, Arbroath harbour, Feb 1

CONGER BOAT

■ Peter Dudgeon, Romsey, 65lb*, Gosport, Jan 23.
 ■ Kaine Stray, Gosport, 40lb*, Gosport, Jan 23

FLATFISH SHORE

■ Oliver Brown, Eastbourne, 3-13 plaice, Langney Point, Feb 6
 ■ Scott Brown, Eastbourne, 3-9 plaice, Langney Point, Feb 6
 ■ Marc Boggust, Poole, 2-0+ plaice*, Sandbanks, Jan 28
 ■ Harrison Catania, Newport, 3-4 flounder*, River Medina, Jan 27

RAY SHORE

■ Robert Baillie, Kirkcudbright, 10-15 thornback*, Dumfries & Galloway, Jan 24
 ■ Ross Baxter, Newport, 11-8 undulate* & 13-8 thornback*, Yarmouth pier, Jan 3 & 31
 ■ Billy Evans, Plymouth, 4-0 spotted*, Devon, Feb 5
 ■ Wayne Lord, Kirkcudbright, 11-6-8 thornback*, Balcary, Jan 24

SHARK BOAT

■ Paul Castle, Southsea, 22-4 spurdog*, Portsmouth, Feb 6



Ross Baxter, Newport, Isle of Wight.

FISH: 11lb 8oz undulate ray & 13lb 8oz thornback.

BAIT: Squid and Bluey on a pulley rig.

VENUE: Yarmouth pier. **DATE:** January 3 and 31



MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS

- **Shore:** 19lb 13oz 8dr John Locker
- **Boat:** 19lb 4oz Wayne Milton
- BLACK BREAM**
- **Shore:** 5lb 5oz 1dr C Le Monnier
- **Boat:** 6lb 6oz Tony Heart
- COUCH'S BREAM**
- **Shore:** 2lb 15oz 1dr Lynton Carre
- **Boat:** 7lb 7oz Lee Hodges
- GILTHEAD BREAM**
- **Shore:** 9lb 8oz Scott Smy
- **Boat:** 10lb 2oz Roger Simcox
- PANDORA'S BREAM**
- **Shore:** 1lb 2oz Baz Wheater
- RAY'S BREAM**
- **Shore:** 6lb 10z Jordan Colwell
- RED BREAM**
- **Boat:** 6lb 4oz Patrick Meegan
- BRILL**

SHORE: 6lb 12oz

- **Shore:** 6lb 12oz Mark Griggs
- **Boat:** 13lb 10oz Tony Hayward
- TURBOT**
- **Shore:** 20lb 2oz Eddy Barham
- **Boat:** 32lb 10z Steve Scally
- BULL HUSS**
- **Shore:** 21lb 9oz M Urquhart
- **Boat:** 23lb D Nicholson
- COD**
- **Shore:** 32lb Adrian Lloyd
- **Boat:** 43lb 9oz Chris Proctor
- CONGER EEL**
- **Shore:** 66lb 8oz Andy Eke
- **Boat:** 109lb 8oz Roger Beer
- DAB**

- **Shore:** 2lb 4oz 12dr Jason Tucker
- **Boat:** 1lb 15oz Sean McCaffrey
- FLOUNDER**
- **Shore:** 4lb 14oz 8dr Paul Blehs
- **Boat:** 5lb 3oz 14dr Philip Dawson
- DOVER SOLE**
- **Shore:** 5lb 5oz Phil Troke
- **Boat:** 4lb 6oz M Le-Moignan
- HALIBUT**
- **Boat:** 5lb 6lb 12oz Peter Strickson
- LEMON SOLE**
- **Boat:** 3lb 3oz G Newcombe
- MEGRIM**
- **Boat:** 2lb 14oz Philip Lewis
- PLAICE**
- **Shore:** 6lb 11oz Martin Coates
- **Boat:** 8lb 0oz 8dr M Mowbray
- LING**
- **Shore:** 18lb 11oz Ross McKay
- **Boat:** 88lb 6oz 8dr Gareth Laurenson
- GOLDEN GREY MULLET**
- **Shore:** 3lb 8oz 8dr D Woolcombe
- **Boat:** 4lb 11oz Stephan Martini
- MULLET**
- **Shore:** 11lb 8oz Glenn Lane
- **Boat:** 11lb Chris Harris

- POLLACK**
- **Shore:** 18lb 4oz Chris Griffin
- **Boat:** 27lb 1oz Barry James
- BLONDE RAY**
- **Shore:** 3lb 1oz Gary Tucker
- **Boat:** 39lb 10oz S Underwood
- COMMON SKATE**
- **Shore:** 23lb Lew Marsden
- **Boat:** 249lb Hans Dykman
- CUCKOO RAY**
- **Shore:** 4lb 11oz Kevin Hughes
- **Boat:** 5lb 8oz L Longmore
- EAGLE RAY**
- **Shore:** 102lb Ray Lewis
- ELECTRIC RAY**
- **Boat:** 52lb Chris Wood
- MARBLLED RAY**
- **Shore:** 1lb 10z 5dr Pierre Garrick
- **Boat:** 21lb 7oz 12dr David Bree
- SMALL-EYED RAY**
- **Shore:** 17lb 8oz M Robertson
- **Boat:** 21lb Dave Lynes
- SPOTTED RAY**
- **Shore:** 7lb 14oz Liam Warder
- **Boat:** 8lb 4oz Neil Buckett
- STINGRAY**
- **Shore:** 75lb 4oz Ed Spring
- **Boat:** 69lb 8oz John Styles
- THORNBACK RAY**
- **Shore:** 22lb 11oz 10dr Mike Johnson
- **Boat:** 24lb 11oz Gary Mewdell
- UNDULATE RAY**
- **Shore:** 20lb 1oz Roger Beer
- **Boat:** 25lb 2oz Scott Russell
- ANGEL SHARK**
- **Boat:** 54lb John Johnson
- BLUE SHARK**
- **Boat:** 253lb James Fellows
- MAKO SHARK**
- **Shore:** 194lb 4oz Andrew Griffith
- PORBEAGLE SHARK**
- **Boat:** 484lb 8oz Chris Bett
- THRESHER SHARK**
- **Boat:** 350lb Bob Smith
- SMOOTHHOUND**
- **Shore:** 28lb 100z Steve Cullen
- **Boat:** 30lb Trevor Knight
- SPURDOG**
- **Shore:** 18lb 14oz William Roche
- **Boat:** 27lb 3oz Paul Westawa
- TOPE**
- **Shore:** 66lb 10oz Michael Bell
- **Boat:** 86lb David Cook
- BALLAN WRASSE**
- **Shore:** 9lb 4oz Darren Swift
- **Boat:** 9lb Glen Carter
- CUCKOO WRASSE**
- **Shore:** 1lb 13oz Joe Edward
- **Boat:** 2lb 4oz D Glendenning
- WHITE SKATE**
- **Boat:** 160lb Pete Hammersley



John McQueen, Nafferton Farm, Northumberland. **FISH:** 9lb 4oz cod. **BAIT:** Squid and cart wings. **VENUE:** Tynemouth area. **DATE:** February 3



Cam Milne, Arbroath, Angus. **FISH:** 8lb 14oz cod. **BAIT:** Mackerel, hermit crab and cart cocktail on Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** Arbroath harbour. **DATE:** February 8.



Billy Evans, Plymouth, Devon. **FISH:** 4lb spotted ray. **BAIT:** Herring, squid and bluey cocktail on up and over rig. **VENUE:** Local beach. **DATE:** February 5



Scott Brown, Eastbourne, East Sussex. **FISH:** 3lb 9oz plaice. **BAIT:** Frozen lugworm on a two-up, one-down rig. **VENUE:** Langney Point, Eastbourne. **DATE:** February 6



Darren Willems, Rattray, Perth & Kinross. **FISH:** 12lb cod. **BAIT:** Dirty squid and mussels on a Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** Arbroath harbour. **DATE:** February 1



Alastair McDonald, Cleadon, Tyne & Wear. **FISH:** 9lb cod. **BAIT:** Yellowtail lug on Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** South Shields pier. **DATE:** February 9



Tom Jenkinson, Brae, Shetland. **FISH:** 23lb cod. **BAIT:** Cart and mussels on a Pennell pulley rig. **VENUE:** Hellister. **DATE:** February 13



Scott Patterson, Edinburgh. **FISH:** 7lb 8oz cod. **BAIT:** Mackerel, mussels and cart on a Pennell pulley. **VENUE:** East Lothian. **DATE:** February 8



Nathan Francis, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire. **FISH:** 8lb+ bass. **BAIT:** King ragworms. **VENUE:** Cold Knap, Barry. **DATE:** November 22

ENTRY FORM

Name	Age
Address	
Postcode	
Tel	
Email	
Type of fish	
Caught at	
Weight	
Date caught	
Bait/Rig	
Caught from: shore <input type="checkbox"/> boat <input type="checkbox"/>	
Boat name	
Skipper	
Port	
My fish was returned <input type="checkbox"/> was not returned <input type="checkbox"/>	

We no longer accept postal entries.
Please email all the details required
above to Sea Angler magazine:
sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
Mark the subject on your email: MISSION ENTRY

YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish on this list at the weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win prizes in our Mission catch competition.

To enter, send us the details requested on the entry form (left) and email that information and your picture to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	7lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's &		
Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	10lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Trigger fish	2lb	3lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

Send us your entries and win some great prizes

■ The winner of the shore category will receive three spools of Tritanium 0.35mm mono, three spools of 80lb Zippy Shockleader, two spools of 20lb Advance Fluorocarbon and a single spool of 30lb 131 G-Core Braid, worth £129 in total.



■ The winner of the boat category receives two spools of 50lb Advance Superline Braid and two spools of 80lbs Zippy Shockleader, worth £154 in total.



THE RULES...

- Only fish caught since February 2021 are eligible. ■ We must see a picture of the fish.
- We may refuse an entry. ■ Enter by email only (please include all of the information requested on the form, left) to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
- Prizes as stated (Sufix reserves the right to send alternatives).
- No correspondence will be entered into.

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'Norse' slow pitched jigs feature:

- Top quality black twin assist hooks with kevlar strings
- Black tube protectors
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- Size 150gm / 160 gm jigs - 3/0 double assist hooks
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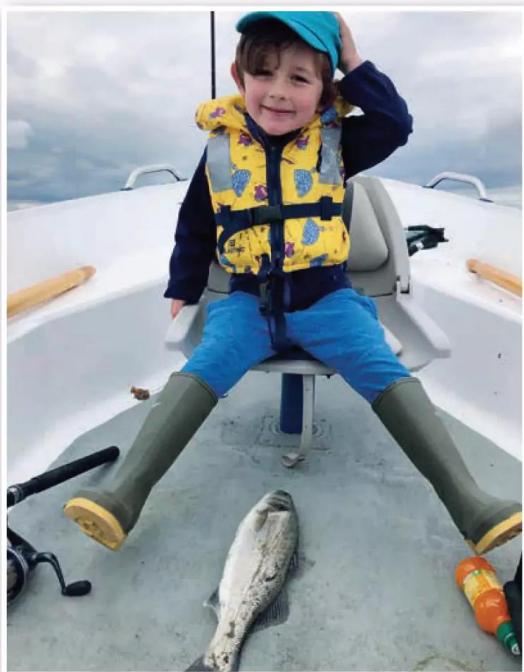
YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its younger readers



▲ Nine-year-old **Lacey Ryan**, of Holyhead, Anglesey, recently had successful fishing sessions on the island. Her catches include this conger eel, several bull huss to 10lb, as well as adding a thornback ray and whiting. Lacey is one of our prize winners.

Her brother Riley (picture inset), aged eight, has been fishing on the island with some success too, catching congers on mackerel baits, and his other species include gurnards, bull huss, plaice and pouting.

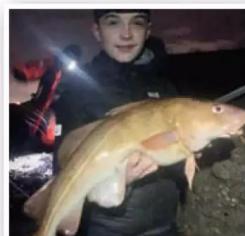


▲ Four-year-old **Jack Doak** caught a string of small pollack and then a 48cm bass on mackerel feathers while boat fishing off Walney Island, Cumbria.



▲ On her first fishing trip, eight-year-old **Sophie Roberts**, of Bangor, Gwynedd, caught this whiting on black lug. She was shore fishing on the local Menai Strait with dad Liam.

► Two-year-old **Jaxson Bassett** joined his dad and uncle for a short session targeting wrasse and, with a little help to steady his rod, reeled this little ballan wrasse up a rock face at Ilfracombe, North Devon. It was his second fish and he is keen to catch more.



▲ This 7lb 9oz cod was a personal best for 12-year-old **Paddy Farrier**, of Walker, Tyne & Wear, and the heaviest fish caught during an East End SAC roving match. He was fishing at Haven Rocks, Tynemouth.

While fishing the Loughor Estuary, six-year-old **Cadi-Lynn Rees**, from Swansea, caught four flounders, the best 1lb, and her three-year-old brother Tom landed three.



▲ Four-year-old **Jackson Ryan** shows off one of three whiting he caught from a mark in Swansea. He fished a two-hook flapper rig baited with strips of mackerel.





▲ **Ruby-Grace Cormack**, aged 12, from Minster, Isle of Sheppey, caught this flounder on squid at Leysdown, Kent.



◀ When Matt Robins, skipper of Atlantis, out of Newquay, Cornwall, took his daughter **Rosie** (9) and son **Charlie** (6) out on his boat they caught six cod in half an hour.

▼ Black lug tipped with squid produced a first ray, this 3lb 13oz thornback, for nine-year-old **Kynon Whiting**, from Newport, while fishing at the Ogmore Deep.



◀ This was a first bass for eight-year-old **Harry Kitson**, who caught it on a ragworm bait while fishing the North Antrim coast with his dad Jonathan and older brother Lewis. The young angler from Newtownabbey also caught two turbot at the same time.

HOW TO ENTER
Send your pictures, name and address and details of the catch to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk



◀ Sticky black lugworms are a recognised bait for dabs and they worked for 12-year-old **Elysia Weston**, from Dover, Kent. She caught this one on a two-hook flapper rig at nearby Sandwich Bay.

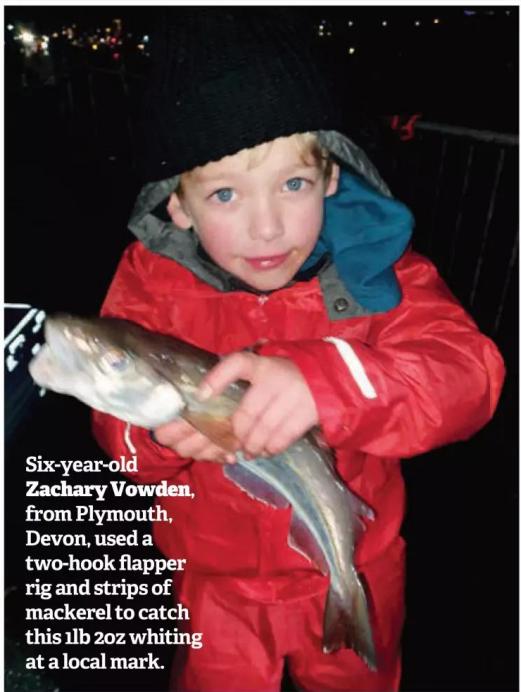


Fourteen-year-old **Dylan Byrne** from St Austell, Cornwall, boated this 70lb conger eel, a personal best, on a half mackerel bait during a charter trip on Aquila, out of Mevagissey, in July last year.

SeaAngler
MONTHLY
WINNER



▲ This black bream was a first fish for **Ralph Stimpson**, from Pagham, West Sussex, who caught it while fishing his local beach last summer. He was eight at the time.



Six-year-old **Zachary Vowden**, from Plymouth, Devon, used a two-hook flapper rig and strips of mackerel to catch this 1lb 2oz whiting at a local mark.



▲ This was a first codling for seven-year-old **James Eades**, from Withernsea. He caught the 1lb fish on a pulley rig baited with squid and mussels while fishing the local Middle Beach. He was using an Anyfish Anywhere Six & Bait rod and an Abu multiplier.



◀ **Poppy Carpenter**, from Jersey, had her first fishing trip last summer and caught this garfish, which her dad Paul said was "almost as long as she is tall". Poppy, who was fishing at Gorey pier, was three at the time.



▶ **Kaiden Nicklin**, who is two and a half, fished the River Wear in Sunderland where he caught his first fish, a whiting, on his new rod. He used a two-hook flapper rig baited with a peeler crab tipped off with mackerel.



▲ Six-year-old **Mason Fair**, from Edinburgh, caught and released a codling and flounder at a local mark. He fished crab and lug baits on a two-hook flapper rig with size 1 hooks. "He's already looking forward to the crabs peeling so he can get his hands into the tyres again," said his grandad Karl McNicholl.



▲ **Tyler Rogers**, aged 12, from Newcastle, with his first catch, a flounder in September when fishing the River Tyne. He used a two-hook flapper rig baited with rag and lug.



▲ While fishing at Doniford, Somerset, 10-year-old **Josh Allen**, from Watchet, and his dad Gary shared a catch of five cod to 7lb 3oz. Josh caught this two-pounder on a squid and cart bait.



Five-year-old **Baxter Nichols** caught this 2lb 8oz ballan wrasse on a ragworm while fishing on his local beach at Beer, Devon.

£25 TACKLE VOUCHER WINNERS



▲ Four-year-old **Teddy Miller**, from South Shields, Tyne & Wear, landed this flatfish at the local walkway on the River Tyne. It is the first fish he has landed himself.

Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from Fishingmegastore.com which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The bites came thick and fast



MY FISHING DIARY

ADVENTURES OF A JUNIOR SHORE ANGLER

Nine-year-old Tyneside angler Harley Thompson gives an account of his latest shore fishing trip...



Lug, rag and frozen peeler crabs are great baits on the Tyne

DUE TO COVID-19 LOCKDOWN restrictions, any travelling to go fishing was strictly off limits. My school was closed and the fishing around these parts hadn't been particularly good either. Thanks to a break in some bad weather, dad and I decided to venture to a mark near to home on the River Tyne.

The best tactic on this estuary is to fish three hours of the flood tide. As I sat in our camper van (well away from other anglers), I was hoping to catch codling and flounders, but, due to a lot of fresh water filling the river, neither of us was expecting to catch much. However, it meant we could try out our new fishing gear that we received for Christmas.

With our freshly dug lugworms wrapped in paper, some ragworms and frozen peeler crabs, we headed down to a mark at Walker. This venue can throw some big codling at times, along with

a variety of other species too. Plenty of pegged matches are held here on the River Tyne and many zones are won from the area we had chosen to fish. With the tides dropping off, I decided to use a long two-up rig loaded with a combination of ragworms, lugworms, frozen peeler crab and tipped-off with Bluey.

A cast of 40 to 50 yards is more than enough to catch most fish from here, so I flicked out my baited rig, mended the mainline and poured myself a cup of hot chocolate before settling down and hoping for a bite. It wasn't long before my rod tip showed signs of a small fish. It gave typical small thumps on the rod tip suggesting it was an undersized codling. After 15 minutes I retrieved my rig to see a nice double-shot of small codling appear on the surface. I changed to my spare rig and cast back out, then released the fish back to the water.

Again, my rod tip started bouncing away on the railing within minutes of casting out. I rebaited my spare rig and waited for a better bite. The bite never progressed so I brought it in with another small codling attached. It appeared the session was going to be a busy one. Three hours passed and almost every cast resulted in double-shots of small codling, making for great sport on my balanced tackle. As I write, I'm keeping my fingers crossed that restrictions ease soon so I can go travelling to other productive venues. I hope you all stay safe in the meantime. ■



The codling were small but great fun on balanced tackle

HARLEY'S TOP TIP

Always check the size of tides and whether it is flooding or ebbing because certain venues will produce better catches on some sizes or particular periods of the tide.

OUT THERE

Memorable moments from your latest sessions

BAIT WINNER



BATTLE STATIONS:

It's hard work battling with a 230lb porbeagle shark as John Monteith discovered during a boat trip in the Pentland Firth. He was fishing on Eun Na Mara, skippered by Chris Bennett, out of Scrabster. The fish took a freelined live cod.



POPULAR:

Before lockdown, Balcary Flat Rock in Dumfries & Galloway was a popular venue for anglers visiting from the North East. Here Ian Cowey shows off a 6lb 4oz thornback ray caught there on a bluey and squid cocktail. The angler from Gateshead also landed a 9lb 4oz bull huss.

Dragon Baits.

WIN A PACK OF DRAGON BAITS RAGWORMS

The best two pictures, selected by the Sea Angler team, will earn the sender 1lb of rag, worth £15 plus p&p, from farmed bait specialist, Dragon Baits.

Please include your name and address when submitting your photograph to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

The company supplies the trade, organisations, fishing clubs and individual anglers direct from its farm in South Wales. Contact Dragon Baits, tel: 01639 894111. Email: info@dragonbaits.co.uk Web: dragonbaits.co.uk



AT LAST: Novice boat anglers David Tingley and his work colleagues from Wokingham, Berks, finally got out on their boat trip last year after cancellations due to the weather and the pandemic.

"We're from a small refurbishment company and novices at boat fishing. We went out on the Meerkat from Weymouth, with skipper Ryan Casey. From the moment we got on the boat we felt at home and in good hands. We have never had such a good day and have already rebooked," said David.



NEW SKIPPER: Rio Brown, from Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, bought himself a boat last summer and got it painted. "I'm so happy to be able to get out fishing and catch many different species," said 14-year-old Rio.



ILLUMINATING: The lights of the riverside buildings in Liverpool glow as local lad Daniel Smith displays a 3lb 8oz cod, caught on an up-and-over rig baited with whole squid while fishing the River Mersey.



AT THE DOUBLE: Squid baits were the key to success for Kevin Ryan when he caught these cod of 13lb and 11lb while fishing in the Bristol Channel. Kevin fishes from his own Warrior 150 boat out of Cardiff.



JOINT EFFORT: Kayak anglers Ged and Jacqui Underwood from Dorset shared in catching this bass, estimated at 12lb, while lure fishing near Lake Pier, Poole. "It was a joint effort and very exciting. Proud to say we released it," said Jacqui.



FULL HOUSE: Not the biggest fish caught before the latest lockdown, but William Johnson was happy to be out fishing. The angler from Sychdyn, Flintshire, used a homemade three-hook flapper rig to catch this full house of whiting at Llandudno North Shore.



EARLY RISER: Fishing an early morning session at the Gasworks beach in Minehead, Somerset, is local angler Dave Rowson, from North Curry.



PADDLE POWER: While kayak fishing off Seaford in December, Richard Boyd, of Hassocks, West Sussex, landed two codling on salted lug.



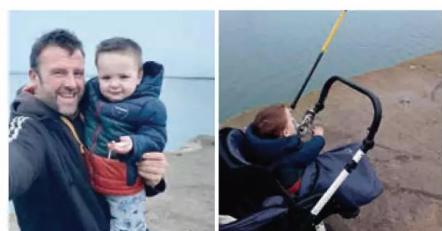
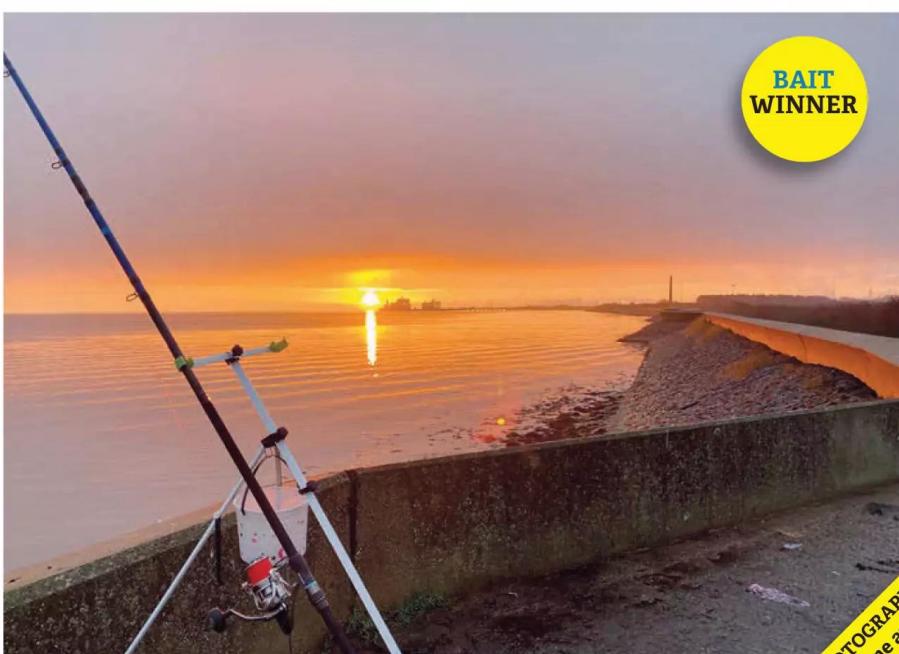
BAY OF PLENTY: It's great getting out with family and friends on a boat trip, especially when the tope are active. Sean Trowlen, of Cushendall, County Antrim, took his Orkney Fastliner 19 out at Red Bay, Northern Ireland, and found plenty of fish during two days of fishing. Here his son James is releasing his first tope, while Sean and his pal Charles Hendron watch.



NIGHT HUNTER: Waiting for a bite on his local coastline is Barry Nevins, of Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. The Boxing Day session produced plenty of codling to 5lb on crab baits.



MARINA GLOW: Milford Haven angler Daniel Hancock took this colourful picture while night fishing at his local marina. "I caught a few whiting but nothing big," he said. "Just nice to be out with the rod."



WHEEL DEAL: Starting fishing when you are only 20 months old has its benefits – a comfortable seat in your buggy. Ollie Cave is pictured at the fish dock in Holyhead, Anglesey, where he caught his first fish, a tiny whiting, aided by dad Dave.

SUNRISE: Dawn at East Halton on the south bank of the Humber captured by Dave McDonald. "A beautiful morning, which produced a few fat dabs," said the angler from Ulceby, North Lincolnshire.

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4.2m • 100-180g

The AKIOS FURY is sure to set new standards, the rod looks and behaves fantastically being tested for over 6 months. The AKIOS FURY rod series offers unbelievable value! Made from High modulus carbon fibre, incorporating a spliced tip, SeaGuide quality guides and reel seats, it is a true GEM, it's sure to become a best seller in the Surf market in the U.K. around Europe and further afield.

14'4.2m - 100-180g (4-6oz) £139.99
15'4.6m - 100-180g (4-6oz) £145.99



HELLRAZOR 420 SS

3 PIECE • 4.2m/14ft

112-225g/4-8oz

The Akios Hellrazor SS 420 offers outstanding performance at an affordable price including fuji guides and fuji reel seat. The AKIOS HELLRAZOR is a powerful blank that still loads its high energy carbon power tip easily. Developed for the angler that's seeking to add extra yardage to their cast.

RRP £169.99 £149.99



ENDURANCE PRO RS2

3 PIECE (Plus extra tip section)

4.26m/14ft • 112-225g/4-8oz

Specifically designed for the modern shore angler that demands versatility without compromising on performance, the dual tipped AKIOS ENDURANCE PRO is built around a high modulus HMX40T carbon blank that generates a remarkable amount of casting power.

RRP £249.99 £219.99



AIRTORQUE 435

3 PIECE • CARBON CONSTRUCTION

4.35m/14.5ft • 110-220g/4-8oz

WHEN EXTRA POWER IS NEEDED

The new Akios AIRTORQUE is set to be a big hit, offering even greater power and greater casting potential than the Airspeed. The AIRTORQUE, with its higher modulus HMX43T carbon construction, offers 20% more power through the butt, middle and lower tip section, giving extra power during casting and quicker line pick up giving faster hook penetration.

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AIRPOWER RXP 435

CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE • 4.35m/14ft 6in

120-225g/4-8oz

Arguably the most powerful three-piece continental style rod on the market. The AKIOS AIRPOWER has been designed with one thing in mind, to offer EXTREME casting capabilities. With its insanely powerful high modulus HMX46T carbon construction, progressive action and lightning fast recovery, the rod sets new standards for modern three-piece rods.

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A TRUE POWER-HOUSE REEL...

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INSTANT DECISION NO PAPERWORK

Finance example based on 24 months, 9.9% APR. Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £61.05, Total Amount Payable £1682.82

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NEW FOR 2021 UTOPIA 420

CONTINENTAL ROD

3 PIECE • 4.2m/14ft • 112-225g/4-8oz

The Akios UTOPIA is a superb all-rounder combining plentiful power, fast recovery, lightness and bite detection. The phosphorescent glow-in-the-dark tip is a godsend during night sessions. The tip slowly emits light energy absorbed from a headlight ensuring sight of tip action whether or not direct light is present.

£299.99



NEW FOR 2021 MOMENTUM SLR

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AKIOS LIGHT YEARS AHEAD!

HYBRID TIP

14'4.2m - 100-180g (4-6oz) £399

15'4.6m - 100-180g (4-6oz) £399



AIRSPED SURF 435

CONTINENTAL • 3 PIECE • 4.35m/14.5ft

100-220g/4-8oz

Akios have done it again, having produced yet another extreme distance casting piece of kit of truly formidable build quality, this time a continental style rod. Airspeed Akios Distance rods are designed in close collaboration with two times world champion sea angler, Alan Price, the Akios AirSpeed Surf continental rod is a serious piece of kit for serious anglers.

RRP £359.99 £314.99



AIRPOWER RXP SRS 435

CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE • 4.35m/14ft 6in • 120-225g/4-8oz

Now With Sliding Reel Seat Ideal For Fixed Spool

And Multipliers. It Allows The Angler to Position The Reel High Or Low On The Rod

Arguably the most powerful three-piece continental style rod on the market. An Angler's dream to have one in mind, to offer EXTREME casting capabilities. With its insanely powerful high modulus HMX46T carbon construction, progressive action and lightning fast recovery, the AIRPOWER sets new standards for modern three-piece rods.

RRP £419.99 £359.99



"RESPECT IS EARNED" NEW FOR 2021 THE GUVNOR GUV GX8

FIXED SPOOL REEL

High Strength Carbon Composite Body / Rotor

6+1 Stainless Ball Bearings

Instant Anti-Reverse System

Long Cast Angled Spool Lip

Powerful Drag System 16kg/35lb

Stainless Steel Spool with Hollow Ball Arm

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Braid Spool 15lb 400yds, 20lb 290yds

Deep Spool 15lb 560yds, 20lb 450yds

RRP £149.99 £139.99



FURY FX8

FIXED SPOOL REEL NEW FOR 2021

AKIOS Fury is a serious piece of kit that doesn't cost the earth.

Featuring a high strength carbon composite body and rotor, a hollow ball arm, and a powerful 32lb/15kg drag system, the FURY FX8 is a very capable shore casting reel.

Smoothness is assured due to no less than 6x stainless steel bearings and an additional Instant Anti Reverse (IAR) bearing.

£69.99



AKIOS FIXED SPOOL REELS NEW FOR 2021

INSTANT DECISION NO PAPERWORK

Finance example based on 24 months, 9.9% APR. Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £61.05, Total Amount Payable £1682.82

INSTANT DECISION NO PAPERWORK

Finance example based on 36 months, 19.5% APR. Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £61.05, Total Amount Payable £1673.99

The advertisement features the Shimano SpeedMaster Beach Rods. It includes a large image of a man with a beard and sunglasses holding a large fish, with several fishing rods standing in the background. The text highlights the rod's features: high modulus full carbon, HPC blank, Nanosheet technology, light weight, increased responsiveness, and casting distance. It also mentions extra fast action, ultra sensitive tip design, Fuji Fazilite K Type anti-tangle guides, Fuji DPS reel seat, and a cast control handle grip. The Speedmaster Beach Rod is shown in two configurations: 14ft 9in 3 Piece - 120g and 5ft 5in 3 Piece - 150g, both priced at £209.99. Three smaller images show close-ups of the rod's tip, guides, and reel seat.

The advertisement features the Shimano SpeedMaster logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'LITE ROD + 2 TIPS' is displayed. To the right, a person wearing a red cap and blue shirt is fishing from a boat, with the ocean and sky in the background. The Shimano rod is prominently displayed in the upper right corner.

Model	Length	RRP	NOW
Vengeance BX Tubular Surf Rod	4.25m	£225	£194.99
Vengeance BX Tubular Surf Rod	4.5m	£225	£199.99
Vengeance BX Solid Surf Rod	4.25m	£225	£194.99
Vengeance BX Solid Surf Rod	4.5m	£225	£199.99
Vengeance Surf Rough Ground	3.96m	£225	£199.99



AIR SURF NEW

Ideal for experienced to competition anglers, the Air Surf is a top of the line surf rod capable of giving you a long range cast.

• SVF and X45	• Japanese Shrink Tube Handle
• V-JOINT Carbon Technology	• Slide Locking DPS Reel Seat
• Mega Top Carbon Hybrid Tip	• Fuji Guide with Alconite Rings
13ft 6in - 4-8oz - Multiplier	RRP NOW
2 Piece.....	£470 £369.99
14ft 2in - 4-8oz - Multiplier	RRP NOW
3 Piece.....	£495 £389.99
15ft 3in - 3-7oz - Fixed Spool Rings	RRP NOW
3 Piece.....	£515 £399.99



SALTIST SURF RODS

Harnessing the best performance from HVF and X45 ensures that these Saltist rods not only have the power but the torque busting resistance of X45 ensures you get the maximum return form effort.

• HVF High Volume Fibre	• Fuji 'O' Ring Guides
• X45 Technology	• Fuji Reels Seats
• V-Joint	• EVA and Shrink Grip handles
12ft 6in - 3-7oz - Multiplier	RRP NOW
2 Piece.....	£205 £159.99
13ft 6in - 3-7oz - Multiplier	RRP NOW
2 Piece.....	£225 £174.99
14ft 2in - 3-7oz - Multiplier	RRP NOW
2 Piece.....	£230 £179.99
14ft - 3-5oz - Fixed Spool	RRP NOW
2 Piece.....	£235 £189.99
14ft - 3-6oz - Fixed Spool	RRP NEW
2 Piece - Hybrid Tip	RRP NEW
2 Piece.....	£245 £224.99
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2 Piece.....	£260 £234.99



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- Premium grade carbon blanks
- DPS Style fixed reel seat
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13ft - 3-7oz - Fixed Spool	RRP NOW
3 Piece.....	£85 £74.99
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3 Piece.....	£90 £79.99
15ft - 3-7oz - Fixed Spool	RRP NOW
3 Piece.....	£95 £84.99



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Sea Angler Review, June 2019

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DAVID BARTHAM
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KENZAKI

Super Kenzaki
FS (Fixed Spool)
Boat Rod
6-12lb, 6-15lb, 12-20lb,
15-25lb, 20-30lb or 30-50lb
7', 7'6" or 8'
RRP £160 £129.99

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

SHIMANO STELLA SW-C

The STELLA SW needs no introduction: it's Shimano's most high-end, durable, strong and powerful spinning reel which is recognized for it's quality and durability by anglers all over the world. The reel has been improved on many points: it is even stronger, more though, more durable and more powerful. The STELLA SW is built to be very strong and powerful, making it possible to fish for big salt water species with spinning tackle. The range includes many different sizes and gear ratio's for many different techniques and purposes.

SW-C 4000 XG • SW-C 4000 HG • SW-C 5000 XG

SW-C 5000 HG • SW-C 6000 PG • SW-C 6000 HG

SW-C 6000 XG • SW-C 8000 HG • SW-C 8000 PG

SW-C 18000 PG • SW-C 14000 XGC

SW-C 18000 HG • SW-C 20000 PG • SW-C 30000

14 Models available

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FIXED SPOOL REELS

The new Saragosa SW is a mid-priced durable, powerful and light weight saltwater reel designed purposely for offshore casting and jigging. Durability is greatly improved by improved HAGANE gearing and the addition of X Protect (IPX-8 rating). In addition to durability, the Saragosa SW offers you high cranking power by means of the new Infinity Drive feature.

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Perfect all-round reel which can be used for all kinds of fishing



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Built using Daiwa's unique carbon technology, HVF High Volume Fibre for a lighter stiffer blank. Bias carbon V-Joint has been applied for a more progressive curve and X45 in key loading areas to control torque during casting. This ultimately converts more energy for longer distance and improved accuracy. Furnished with premium Fuji K Alconite guides with and Fuji reel seat. All multiplier models are fitted with sliding reel seats with a fixed DPS on fixed spool and bass models.

Tournament Surf Rods - 3 Piece	RRP NOW
11ft 6in - 1-3oz Multiplier Rings 3 Piece	£285 £229
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14ft 2in - 4-8oz Multiplier Rings 2 Piece	£350 £279
15ft - 3-6oz Fixed Spool Rings 3 Piece	£310 £249
15ft - 3-6oz Fixed Spool Rings 3 Piece	£325 £259

Tournament Surf Rods - 2 Piece

RRP **NOW**

11ft 6in - 1-3oz Multiplier Rings 3 Piece

RRP **NOW**

12ft 6in - 3-7oz Multiplier Rings 3 Piece

RRP **NOW**

13ft 6in - 3-7oz Multiplier Rings 3 Piece

RRP **NOW**

14ft 2in - 4-8oz Multiplier Rings 3 Piece

RRP **NOW**

15ft - 3-6oz Fixed Spool Rings 3 Piece

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RRP **NOW**



BOAT ANGLER

18 PAGES OF ADVICE, TIPS AND TACTICS FOR FISHING AFLOAT

SWITCHING ROLES

From a career in rugby, Darren Ryan made the big conversion to life as a charter boat skipper

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what professional rugby players do when their competitive playing days finally come to an end? Some, of course, remain involved in the sport by working as coaching staff, while a few of the highest profile stars become media pundits or match reporters. That still leaves many who have to decide what to do with the rest of their lives; players such as Darren Ryan.

Darren, who lives in Cardiff, began his career playing rugby union, being capped four times for the Wales Under 19 team. He was good enough to play professionally, but at the time there was more money to be earned playing Rugby League rather than Union, and like many good players of his era Darren switched

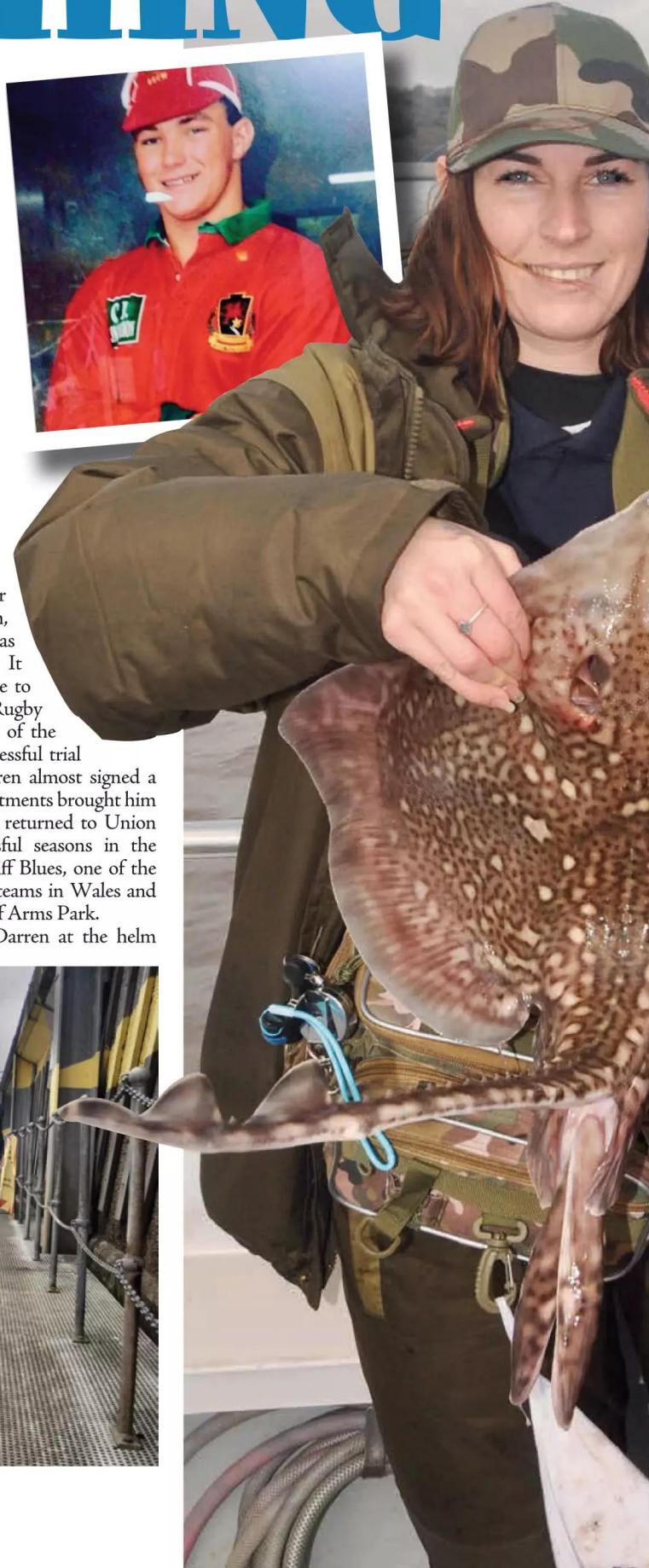
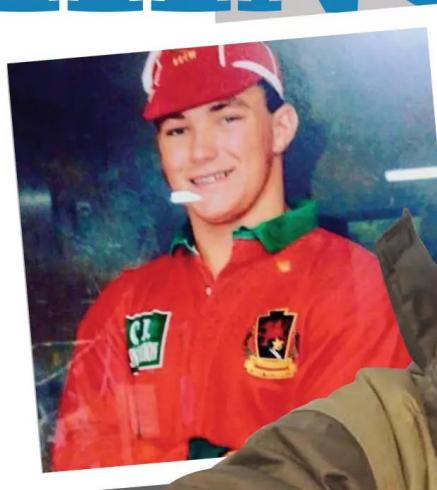
A proud Darren capped for Wales as an under 19 international

codes. He signed for Aberavon Fighting Irish, formed in 2003, and was soon capped for Wales. It wasn't long before he came to the attention of the big Rugby League sides in the north of the England. Following a successful trial period at St Helens, Darren almost signed a contract, but family commitments brought him back to Cardiff, where he returned to Union and played seven successful seasons in the number 12 shirt for Cardiff Blues, one of the four professional regional teams in Wales and based at the famous Cardiff Arms Park.

These days you'll find Darren at the helm

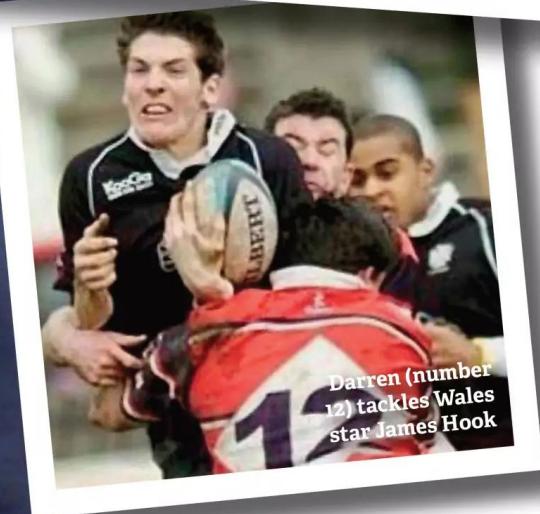


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Words and
photography by
DAVE LEWIS



of Sea Leopard, his immaculate charter boat. Having always been a keen sea angler, the switch to becoming a full-time charter skipper when his rugby playing days came to an end was little more than a seamless transition. He's now running a successful business with a strong base of customers.

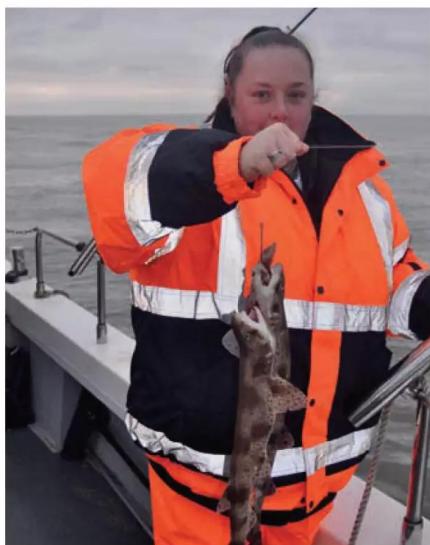
CLUB OUTING

Sea Leopard is berthed on the River Ely, which flows into Cardiff Bay, and on a recent trip while waiting to lock out through the Cardiff Bay Barrage, I am sure that on more than one occasion I spotted Darren looking longingly at the impressive profile of the Cardiff Millennium Stadium, which dominates the city skyline when viewed from 'The Bay'.

Darren has several of his former rugby teammates, including some of the biggest names in the game, keen to join him for a day fishing too, but for this trip the day's crew consisted of members of the Lady Hookers, a fishing club rather than rugby players.

Based in South Wales and essentially an all-female group, the club has an impressive 40 members and was the brainchild of 29-year-old Natasha Jenkins from Briton Ferry in South Wales. A trainee teacher, entrepreneur and part-time model, prior to the first lockdown ▶

Natasha Jenkins and skipper Darren Ryan tackle a thornback ray



A double shot of dogfish for Charlotte Bullen, who also caught some strap eels

her leisure time typically involved riding performance motorbikes on track days. Now, increasingly you'll find her fishing throughout South Wales, both from the shore and afloat. You may remember her from when she featured in Sea Angler issue 588 during a beach session near Porthcawl.

At the time the club booked the boat, the first run of winter cod appeared to be gathering some momentum at the eastern end of the Bristol Channel. Darren's crews had caught some very nice fish including low doubles, but as we boarded the boat our enthusiasm was tempered when the skipper informed us that the weather had changed in recent days and very few cod were showing.

On the way to fish our first mark to the west of Barry I watched with interest as Natasha rigged her tackle and started to bait a hooklength with some freshly dug lugworms. When I offered to help out, she said: "I have done this before, I'm doing fine thanks, I'm just a little slow, but I'll get there. I really want to learn how to do everything for myself." Fair play, I thought. Then I had a quiet chuckle to myself when I remembered the response from a reader who, following the publication of the last article, had contacted the editor saying Natasha wasn't a real angler and the magazine had only printed the article because she was a model. Well, whoever you were, I really wish you had been here to watch them fishing.

Fairly quickly the first rod tips started to indicate bites, but not the positive 'two nods for a cod' that we wanted but rather the persistent worrying rattle of nuisance dogfish that like nothing better than to decimate a lovingly prepared bait. Of course, it's always nice to get a few bites at the start of a day's fishing, but the novelty quickly wears off when bite after bite results in little more than yet another squirming green-eyed dogfish. It's particularly irksome when you remember how much you had paid for your bait. The first mark produced nothing more than dogfish, and after an hour Darren decided to move the boat to another area.

FISHING VARIETY

Soon we arrived at a patch of mixed ground where various species of ray, along with conger eels and, when they are around, cod are caught. Once again, the first few casts produced more bait-robbing dogfish. They are what you might call a Marmite species, one that anglers either love or hate. Of course, many match anglers love their readiness to be caught, novice anglers too, but I can't abide them. Like so many other boat anglers based in South Wales, the novelty of catching lots of dogfish, even on such tough days, has long ceased to exist.

Finally, Tasha hooked a better fish. The bend in her rod confirmed that, whatever it was, it was noticeably bigger than a dogfish. While demonstrating the patience of so many female anglers, she worked her fish closer to the boat. For a few moments we even speculated that she might have hooked a cod. Eventually, the spiralling of the line at the point where it entered the murky brown water indicated a ray. It was not surprise when Darren reached out with the landing net and secured the first thornback ray of the day.

Throughout the rest of the day variety came in the form a few strap congers, another Bristol Channel staple that appear to be doing very well. Darren had been monitoring both social media and the VHF and these confirmed that nobody was doing any better than us; indeed, we were catching more than most. It was one of those days.

Currently back in lockdown, like anglers throughout the country I am champing at the bit to get out fishing. The Lady Hookers have more trips booked on Sea Leopard, and I have been invited to join them. ■



Juicy lug – ready to be 'wasted' on dogfish



Charlotte Bullen, Natasha Jenkins and Julie Davis of the Lady Hookers



Natasha prepares to release a thornback

NEED TO KNOW

- **Boat:** To book a charter aboard Sea Leopard, contact Darren Ryan, tel: 07729 228797 or find him on Facebook (Darren Ryan Sea Leopard Charter).
- **Club:** If you are a female sea angler, either novice or experienced, who would like to join the Lady Hookers, based in South Wales, get in touch with Tasha. She also produces personalised clothing, including the Lady Hookers' products seen in this article.
- **Email:** prettyinprint2020@gmail.com
- **Web:** www.facebook.com/Pretty-in-Print-115061240252605

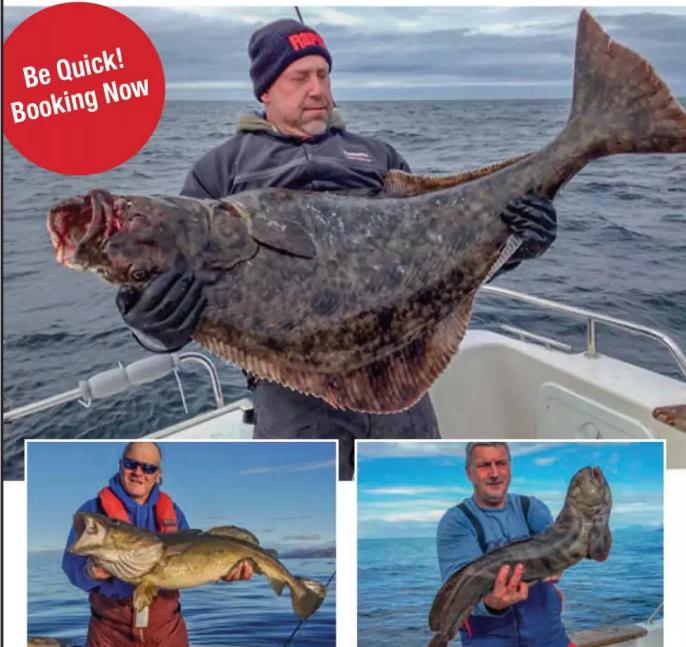


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NORWAY

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**NEW SERIES:
SMALL-BOAT
OWNERSHIP
- PART 5**

How to use VHF radio

Help is at hand to master the correct procedures



ALL SEA-GOING VESSELS should carry a marine VHF radio, yet some anglers rarely use them even though being familiar with the equipment is essential in an emergency. There is even a surprising number of people who are too shy to use their device unless absolutely necessary. This is far from ideal.

Marine VHF radio comes in two forms, either a fixed set, which is best, or a removable handheld, which is better than nothing. The best solution is to carry both to ensure you have a backup and, of course, it is important to use them. All small-boat owners really should carry a VHF radio aboard their vessels.

Having a VHF radio is one thing, but, whenever it is used, at least one person onboard must hold a Marine Radio Operator Certificate of Competence (Short Range Certificate), which is issued by the RYA on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. There are many RYA-approved training centres around the country and obtaining an operator certificate requires attending a one-day course, followed by a basic procedural test. Once issued the certificate lasts for life. Details of your

nearest training centre can be found on the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) website.

Most radio courses start off with a demonstration of basic VHF radio procedures and protocol, which ensures everyone is familiar with the correct method of transmitting and receiving simple messages. You will learn the correct use of the words 'over' and 'out', which should never be used together as 'over and out'. The course will also cover the correct use of high and low power, which is something many VHF users who have not attended a course fail to understand.

Here's a typical example of a VHF radio conversation between a private angling boat and my nearest HM Coastguard station:

"Swansea Coastguard, Swansea Coastguard, Swansea Coastguard, Alison calling Swansea Coastguard, over."

"Alison, this is Swansea Coastguard, go to Channel 67, over."

"Swansea Coastguard, this is Alison on Channel 67. How do you receive me now, over?"

"Alison, this is Swansea Coastguard receiving you loud and clear. Pass your message over."

"Swansea Coastguard this is Alison, a 16ft private angling boat. We have two persons on



A fixed marine radio is the best option

board and have just launched at Knab Rock and will be fishing inshore off the south Gower coast, mostly in the area off Three Cliffs. ETA back at Swansea is approximately 1900."

"Alison all received, have a good day, Swansea Coastguard out."

"Thanks Swansea Coastguard, we'll be standing by on Channel 16, Alison out."

This simple, concise, yet informative exchange, amended to your own boat and activity, should be carried out every time you use your boat, though unfortunately this is far from the case. Apart from ensuring your safety in the event of an emergency, using your boat's radio to contact the Coastguard at the start of each day confirms that not only is your onboard VHF receiving, but also that it is transmitting efficiently too.

HM Coastguard recommends that all recreational boat users download the RYA SafeTrx app. A web-based version of this tracking system is also available on its website. It replaces the CG66 scheme.

DSC & MMSI

Most modern marine VHF radios are the DSC (Digital Selective Calling) variety. Interfaced with your boat's GPS system, there are several fundamental differences between a DSC set and an ordinary VHF. Firstly, DSC sets can be used by utilising Channel 70 to send a digital signal to three distinct recipients – all stations (just like a normal VHF radio), to a pre-selected group of stations (for example club boats) or to an individual station (for example a friend's boat). This greatly reduces unnecessary radio traffic on Channel 16, which is a designated distress channel.

Once a new radio is registered with the Ofcom Licensing Centre (OLC), it will be allocated a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI), a unique nine-digit number that, in effect, is that set/boat's telephone number. It's an excellent system that you will learn to use correctly by attending the RYA course.

The correct procedures for transmitting an emergency call (or Mayday) are the key elements of the day's course. Originally, many radio terms were transmitted in French, and Mayday originates from M'aidez (help me). There is a



The certification course is informal but gives you all the necessary radio procedures



A registered radio will get a unique MMSI



The red button transmits a distress signal

clearly defined procedure to follow in the event of transmitting or receiving a Mayday, or other high-priority transmissions such as Pan-Pan or Securite. If you run your own craft or regularly crew aboard a friend's boat, it is important to learn the correct use of these procedures.

Another fundamental difference with DSC is the way in which a user transmits a distress call. In addition to sending the signal verbally, each designated set features a red distress button, which is protected from accidental use

by a protective clear plastic cover. If you lift the cover and press the red button for five seconds, the set transmits a distress signal that will sound an audible alarm on all sets in the vicinity that receive the signal. Apart from transmitting your MMSI number, the set will provide your exact position in latitude and longitude, which clearly is a significant advantage in any situation where, by definition, you are in grave and imminent danger and require immediate assistance.

The RYA course is held on an informal yet highly informative basis, with everyone having the opportunity to practice all key procedures to the point where, by the end of the day, they will be able to use a DSC VHF with a suitable standard of proficiency. A brief written test at the day's conclusion ensured that all essential knowledge has been absorbed. ■



Inform the Coastguard when you depart and return

For details of your nearest RYA training centre and to enrol on a VHF course, visit www.rya.org.uk

To register a new VHF set or for more licensing information, visit www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing

BOAT ANGLER



Words and
photography by
MIKE THRUSSELL





HOW TO HUNT HALIBUT

If you're planning a trip to Norway to fish for these huge flatfish, we've made it much easier for you to discover the hottest marks

THINK ABOUT NORWAY AND visions of big cod come instantly to mind. Yet, talk to anglers who visit the country for the first time and the fish they really want to catch is the mighty halibut. Some succeed, but others have not felt the power of this monster flatfish.

While the fishing camps are generally excellent and the staff will happily answer any questions you may have, there is only so much they can do about finding fish for you. Guides help but add cost, and some anglers prefer a holiday doing it their own way. Once you accept the keys to the hire boat and venture out to sea for the first time, you're going to be looking for fish by your own wits. If you're unsure how best to hunt halibut, here are some pointers that might help you put that elusive big fish on your species list.

PREPARATION TIME

Social media pages and websites dedicated to the venue you're visiting can provide catch reports and other information, but, generally, these won't be much help about specific areas to fish. If you use this source, then do so only for the month within which your trip falls. There is no point looking at halibut caught in September if your trip takes places in July because the fish will have moved.

The first real step is to load Navionics on to your phone to get access to the ground features in the area you will fish. Alternatively, buy the Admiralty or Imray navigation charts for the area. It's good to have both Navionics and a hard copy chart, but the chart lets you see a bigger scale in detail prior to the trip and you can identify ground that might be of interest.

When you take charge of the boat, there are

usually small sections of chart, applicable to the likely area you will fish, on board. If not, check with the camp guide/leader and ask for a print-out of the local chart. It is worth asking for details of a few consistent areas for halibut and use these as basic information to get started. It is unwise to rely on marks already plotted into the boat sounder because these will be mostly general fishing areas. Some are good and others not so good. In fact, they are only as good as the anglers that put in the details, and they might also have different expectations than you. They may also be places that produce fish in April or May and you're there in July or August. It is much better to make your own judgement and pick out places that look like they will specifically hold halibut.

SEASONAL MOVEMENT

There is sometimes an illusion that this fish does not move far, but the opposite is true. Halibut travel as required to adjust to food availability. If your trip is early spring, say April or May, then expect most of the halibut to be in the deeper water, say from 100 feet to 300 feet. The band between 125-200ft is a good one to investigate at this time.

By June they are moving into shallow water as the water temperature rises slightly and the prey fish move shallower and become more active. July and August often see halibut move into water as little as 25ft deep, sometimes even less, and these can be big fish well in excess of 100lb, though the majority are up to 50lb.

By September, there will be fewer halibut in the shallows and most start to move into deeper water. If you are not catching in deep water, try shallow or vice versa.

The exceptions are the very big fish well over 100lb. These halibut tend to stay in deeper water up to 200ft deep, positioning themselves



Don't always trust the well-fished marks

where there are natural transit routes for cod, torsk and haddock that form a large proportion of their diet. For the most part, the very big fish, the real lumps over 200lb, tend to be in water in excess of 200ft, but there are always exceptions. Halibut over 25lb, and especially the 100lb-plus fish, tend to be solitary creatures and dominate a large patch of ground. I was told this by a Norwegian commercial fisherman a fair few years ago and it turned out to be true. It's not the case though, with smaller fish up to 20lb because two or three of these can be taken in areas the size of an average garden.

LIGHT LEVELS

You're on holiday and it's very tempting to fish office hours, but it will cost you a lot of fish. Halibut are not lovers of bright skies and clear sunshine. In deep water you might stand a chance, but your chances diminish quickly in water of 150ft or less. The best days are those with cloud cover or when there is rain predicted. The water in the fjords is very clear and light levels penetrate a long way down, so bear this in mind when selecting marks on bright days.

In summer, there is no real darkness in Norway and not that much in late spring and early autumn, so use the twilight periods of dawn and dusk as much as you can. A good option is to fish from 8pm to 4am, come in, get something to eat, sleep, then fish for other species from 10am to 4pm. Yes, it's disruptive to your sleep pattern, but if you want to maximise your chances of a halibut then needs must. The period either side of midnight is also best for the bigger cod too.



The best days are those with cloud cover

MOVING TARGET

I'm not looking at tackle here because it has been covered many times before, but one of the best tips for halibut is that they like a naturally moving bait. Smaller pirk, especially with a luminous green muppet on the hook, work well just to get you on the score sheet. One of the best is the Abu Sillen.

For general day to day fishing, you can't beat a jighead such as the Sea Waver Giant Jig head, which is designed to take a rubber shad mounted in the nose and comes in sizes 200g to 500g. The shape looks like a fish and creates a big silhouette, while the big tail of the shad creates vibrations irresistible to the halibut. You will catch bigger cod in huge numbers, too. It's by far my favourite lure.

If you really want to be single minded and target just one huge 100lb-plus fish, then consider using a fresh coalfish of about 1-2lb mounted on a boom and a mono trace (about 3ft long) with size 10/0 hooks. This approach requires patience, but will get you a big halibut sooner or later.



Fishing with a pirk should take a halibut



A luminous muppet is good in low light

6 PLACES TO FIND HALIBUT



1 RISING HUMPS: The type of ground feature you need is any rising area that comes off the seabed lifting towards the surface. Those who have visited Norway may have noticed that much of the rising ground tends to be rounded off and not necessarily the sharp pinnacles seen in UK waters. There will be a gouge or what looks like a hollow notch or wedge cut into the rock not too far below the peak of the structure. Sometimes there are two of these below the peak and these almost always hold a halibut. If you see structure like this, mark it.

To fish these rising humps, judge the wind and the tide, and create a drift that brings you right over the top of the pinnacle and over the notch. Watch the depth reading on the sounder as you drift and release line accordingly to keep the lure working about six to 10 feet above the ground. This near contact with the ground is vital to success. Halibut have their eyes on top of their heads and are looking upwards, so they are watching for silhouettes that pass overhead.



This fish fell to a jig head and giant shad

and will lift off the seabed to intercept passing items of food, such as cod.

When drifting like this, you'll catch the cod more frequently between 25-75ft deep and the halibut the same, though the halibut can be a little deeper if there is suitable feature for them to find. Once you go deeper than 75ft, then catches fall away slowly. Again, this is a general rule, not absolute, but it illustrates why the halibut like this type of feature because it gives them ideal cover to ambush the cod within a depth that concentrates their prey fish in their biggest numbers.

2 DEEP WATER UNDER CLIFFS:

Another good spot for halibut is directly below sheer cliffs, especially if there is loose rock that has tumbled down the face into deep water at the base of the structure. Look for depths from 50-150ft as being ideal. Check out the stone that makes up the cliff face, especially if there is loose scree evident. Smaller boulders fit together better and create generally flatter ground and therefore provide the halibut with comfortable places to rest. Bigger boulders, say half the size of a car, are harder for the bigger halibut to lay on and areas where bigger boulders show will tend to hold small halibut.

3 THE SHALLOWS: In the July and August period when the halibut move into the shallows, you need to locate areas where the dry land feature is not quite so sheer with no evidence of loose scree. Areas of flat rocks can be a summer hotspot for the halibut, and especially in the more northern regions of Norway.

One July I once found such a spot near Havoysund and enjoyed amazing results with halibut to 35lb in only 20ft of water along a half mile of coastline. I was setting up the boat drift just 25 yards off the shoreline. It was so shallow that once we'd found them I was scared any boat noise might spook them. We had to

keep deck noise to a minimum, but the area was packed with halibut. Try to use any wind and tide to drift across these flatter areas, but on the calmer days you have to use boat power to keep adjusting position and to cover more ground.

4 MIXED GROUND: In some fjords you find that one side is very deep and the other offers a band of shallow, flattish ground with a depth of no more than 40ft, sometimes less. This is usually made up of a mix of rougher patches with muddy sand or sand in between. These are good areas to try in the warmer months of July and August. It seems numbers of fish do not move into this shallow ground, but individuals do. I think they are looking to take advantage of less competition for food from other halibut.



This halibut with mottled markings was caught in 20ft of water



Jig heads and shads do well for smaller fish



The Abu Sillen pirk is a popular choice



Small bar pirk with muppets

5 SANDY BAYS: If there are any sandy bays, bear these in mind too. Water depth can be critical here because the fish get spooked easily in anything less than 20ft during daylight. These are not big-fish marks in my experience, but if you hit bad weather and are looking to catch a small halibut, then drifting through these bays fishing a small, weighted shad on a Whitby rig can produce numbers of smaller halibut. The rig is simply a strong American snap swivel tied to the leader with your lead weight clipped to the snap link. To the same eye the leader is tied, attach your length of fluorocarbon and then the lure to this.

6 DEEP WATER: The big question is what do you look for to target big halibut in deep water? Frankly, they are not predictable. The best areas seem to be anywhere around islands where there is some tidal current, but, generally speaking, the water needs to be well in excess of 150ft. Look for those flatter areas where a big halibut can lay up comfortably, but stick to rough ground rather than clean ground.

It's the same in the deeper water of the open fjords, where you should seek out deep water and rough ground and keep drifting it to find individual fish. I'm not saying halibut living over flat mud doesn't happen, but they prefer rougher ground for cover. The flat muddy ground is often devoid of fish except for a few torsk and maybe wolf-fish. ■

Marks close to the camp can produce fish, but may be fished the most often





FOR AS LONG AS I CAN remember, my angling routine has followed the same general path every year of going from competition to competition. With Covid-19 causing the cancellation of my usual events last year, a new plan was required to get my fishing fix.

It was the perfect opportunity to visit some different ports, try new marks at well-trodden venues and practise various methods. My buddy Scott Gibson suggested visiting Oban. There, his friend Ronnie Campbell who operates Laura Dawn 2, had employed a new skipper called Leigh Taylor to help him keep his successful charter business going as he takes a step back from frontline duties.

Normally when you visit Oban for a day's charter fishing it will be to target some of the best common skate fishing available, but if the weather is poor you will be in Loch Etive seeking spurdogs, whiting and gurnards. The waters around Oban also feature islands, deep-water trenches, reefs and rarely fished bays.

POLLOCK ACTION

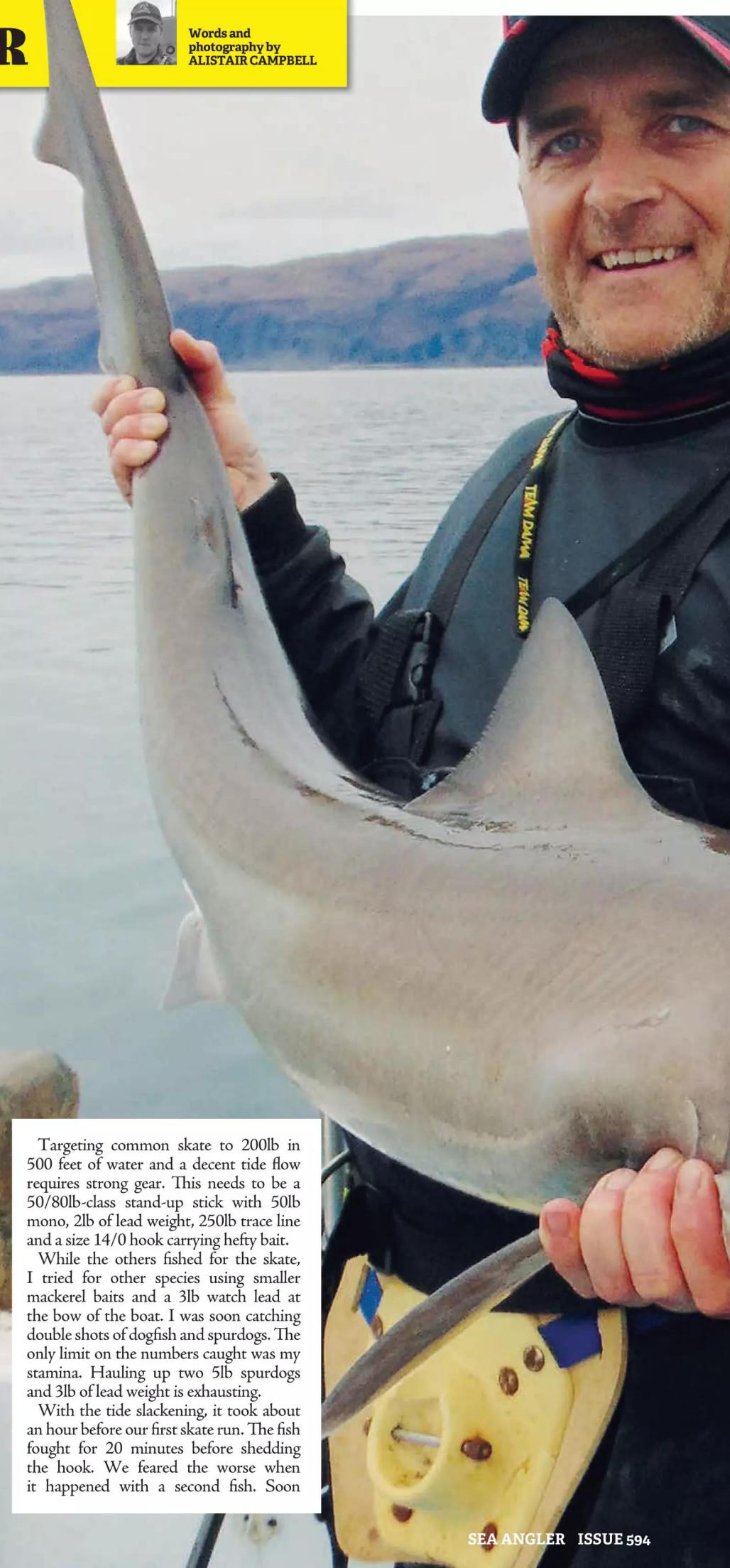
Our first trip in August with Leigh concentrated on the islands in the Firth of Lorne, where we hoped to find some good fishing for pollack and wrasse when drifting under the cliffs in 20-50 feet of water. Throughout the day there was a steady stream of these species coming over the gunnels, with the best pollack around 8lb. There were no doubles this time. Live ragworms on small leadheads worked best.

For this fishing, use an 8-10ft spinning rod with some backbone, or a light uptider. My choice is an old Daiwa Whisker salmon spinning rod or a Greys Advent uptider, coupled with a medium-size fixed spool with the smoothest drag you can find. I use 12-15lb Daiwa Hyper Sensor mono line, which gives an ideal level of strength versus stretch when matched with those rods, and allows me to keep the fish out of the kelp while still making the battle enjoyable.

For the next trip we fished some of the wrecks in the Firth of Lorne. As we were not set up for anchoring for congers, our first attempts were on the drift. We tried various methods, from slow retrieving artificials and ragworms to standard jigging and bait fishing, which produced mainly pollack, wrasse, gurnards, whiting and pouting. These wrecks have real potential and we hope to test them in various tidal conditions.

SKATE SESSION

On our next trip we fished for skate at one of the deepest of our standard marks. I hoped to catch some black mouth dogfish, which are found in a few deep-water marks.



Targeting common skate to 200lb in 500 feet of water and a decent tide flow requires strong gear. This needs to be a 50/80lb-class stand-up stick with 50lb mono, 2lb of lead weight, 250lb trace line and a size 14/0 hook carrying hefty bait.

While the others fished for the skate, I tried for other species using smaller mackerel baits and a 3lb watch lead at the bow of the boat. I was soon catching double shots of dogfish and spurdogs. The only limit on the numbers caught was my stamina. Hauling up two 5lb spurdogs and 3lb of lead weight is exhausting.

With the tide slackening, it took about an hour before our first skate run. The fish fought for 20 minutes before shedding the hook. We feared the worse when it happened with a second fish. Soon

OBAN'S FULL OF OPPORTUNITY

Testing the water with the new skipper of a famous charter boat



Scott Gibson with a skate and tope (left)

afterwards, Scott's reel started to be stripped of line, which is quite uncharacteristic for a big skate, and after 15 minutes of lively action he boated a 40lb tope.

Soon the skate came on the feed, with seven landed in the final three hours to the four skate rods. Fortunately or unfortunately for me, I hooked a skate on my dogfish gear. Given that there are so many spurdogs in the area, my gear had 100lb snoods and after at least 40 minutes I boated a skate of 110lb.

I didn't want to risk catching another one, so used size 6 hooks for the rest of the day.

The best skate of 207lb fell to Scott.

All the skate were measured, tagged (if not already tagged) and released. The common skate fishery is a beacon of how targeted conservation activities and the involvement of anglers in the process can turn around the fortunes of an at-risk species. I am hearing plenty of reports of large numbers of skate being caught from areas they have not been seen for many years. There are several charter boats throughout Scotland that specialise in these monsters and most of these will have suitable hire tackle available. If you are keen to get your own gear then look for a 6-7ft stand-up stick matched with slow/twin-speed multiplier, such as a Penn Senator 6/0, but make sure you get one with lugs fitted as you need a harness to endure the long battle.

We are hoping to try more marks around Oban, perhaps going after tope, a night-time jaunt for a hake, conger hunting or some deep-water fishing for something different. The possibilities are endless. ■



Skipper Leigh Taylor releases a common skate

NEED TO KNOW

If you are interested in fishing on the Laura Dawn 2, get in touch with Leigh Taylor, tel: 07548 684978 or via Facebook.

The writer, Alasdair Campbell, is the manager of Scotland's boat team and vice-president of the Scottish FSA.



SEVEN-POINT PLAN FOR SPRING COD

Make sure you are prepared for the annual influx of our favourite fish

IN RECENT YEARS ANGLERS FISHING in the Bristol Channel haven't seen any large runs of cod during the autumn and winter months, but thankfully those fish we get each spring can be prolific. At times these spring runs consist of good numbers of codling along with a few bigger ones, and on those magical days when you find yourself in just right place at the right time you can catch a lot of them.

The number of fish caught each spring is all the more impressive when you consider the vastly reduced amount of fishing effort at this time of the year, compared to autumn and winter when, weather permitting, dozens of boats will be on the water.

1 RELIABLE INFORMATION

Nowadays, social media is the grapevine of catch information for many anglers, but it should be taken with a pinch of salt because it can get exaggerated. Nothing beats a telephone conversation with friends who have actually been fishing and can be trusted to give you an accurate account of what they and other boat crews have caught.

Fish arrive in an area, stay for a few tides, and then disappear, so you need to determine where the cod are currently being caught. Are they feeding off Cardiff Foreshore, Sully Bay, Aberthaw or on the opposite side of the channel or elsewhere? There is no guarantee that the fish will remain in the same area where your contacts caught them, but it is encouraging to start with the knowledge that fish were caught in this exact same area just a day or so before.

2 THE BEST BAIT

The key to consistently catching cod is good quality bait. Fresh black lug is the first choice of many anglers, with king ragworms, blow lug, squid (see page 58) and most forms of shellfish also producing fish.



Black lug is the top bait choice



Squid is popular selection too

It is essential to use large juicy baits that emit a strong scent trail in heavily coloured water. With near-zero visibility at most marks in the area, the only way foraging fish are going to locate your bait is by its scent. Anyone seeking cod anywhere around the UK this spring should get the best quality bait possible.

3 EASY RIG

The running leger is the most effective rig when either fishing downtide or uptide for cod. Slide a small bead on to your leader to prevent the top of the boom from getting stuck on the leader knot, which can happen if a good fish drags the full length of the leader through the boom. I use four-inch tube booms for uptiding, but some anglers like a snap link or zip slider. Its

primary function is to hold the lead weight, but the advantage of a tube boom is that it helps to prevent the hooklength from tangling around the sinker's grip wires when you are casting your rig away from the boat.

Following the boom, I slide a second bead on the leader to reduce any risk of the end of the boom damaging the knot that attaches the link to which the hooklength is attached. The advantage of using a link to attach the hooklength, rather than tying it directly to a swivel, is that it allows quick bait changes (see No 4).

When uptiding in strong tides for cod I use relatively short hooklengths of around three to four feet of 50-60lb mono line. I like the Sakuma 545 Manta Extra pattern, typically in size 2/0 to 4/0. When fishing in strong tides you need a decent grip weight to anchor the rig on the seabed.

4 THE NEED FOR SPEED

Double patting, as it is known, involves working with two or three hooklengths at a time, so that while one baited rig is fishing, you can load a spare hooklength or two with bait to save losing fishing time. When you either catch a fish or reel in to change to a fresh bait, you simply unclip the old bait, attach a ready baited hooklength, and cast back out.

Periods of relative inactivity are often punctuated by a flurry of bites when a shoal of fish swims past, so only by having pre-baited hooklengths ready can you increase the time you have a freshly baited rig in the water at this peak period of activity.



All smiles for a plump fish



5 ROD COUNT

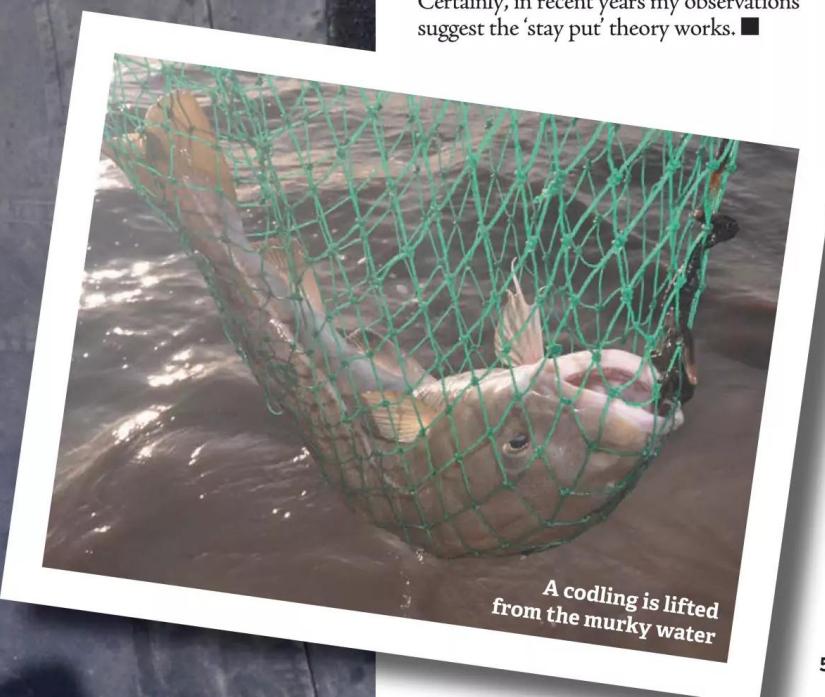
When it comes to fishing aboard a charter boat, I prefer to use one rod. On a full charter boat trip this means eight or 10 baits will be fishing at a time, which equates to a strong scent trail to attract the fish. With more fresh bait in the water, it increases the chance of attracting isolated shoals of fish, hence when fishing aboard private boats I see a big advantage in fishing as many rods as practical.

6 REACT TO CATCH

When another angler lands a cod, I suggest reeling in as quickly as possible (unless your bait has been cast within 10 minutes), attaching a fresh bait, and recasting. This gives you the best opportunity of catching a fish as the shoal moves through. Even the largest baits will have emitted most of their attractive juices within 20 to 30 minutes of being cast out, so this is the maximum time interval within which you should replace each bait.

7 STAY PUT THEORY

If you have anchored in an area where fish have been caught in recent days, my advice is to resist the urge to move elsewhere if things start quietly. It is a big temptation to relocate if you hear that some fish are being caught in another area close by. In all likelihood, the fish will be gone by the time you have moved, possibly swimming past the area you have just left. Certainly, in recent years my observations suggest the 'stay put' theory works. ■



A codling is lifted from the murky water



Double up for cod

How to prepare small squid to make large baits

IT SEEMS THAT EVERY YEAR THE size and quality of squid available differs greatly. Some years they are a decent size, maybe seven inches long, but in others they can be as small as only four. They're not a different species or subspecies either.

Last year, the squid we were buying in 10kg and 20kg blocks varied considerably, and towards the end of the year the average size in the blocks was a fair bit smaller than the ones we'd been getting throughout the summer. When it came to 'cod time' we had to double up to make larger baits with more scent.

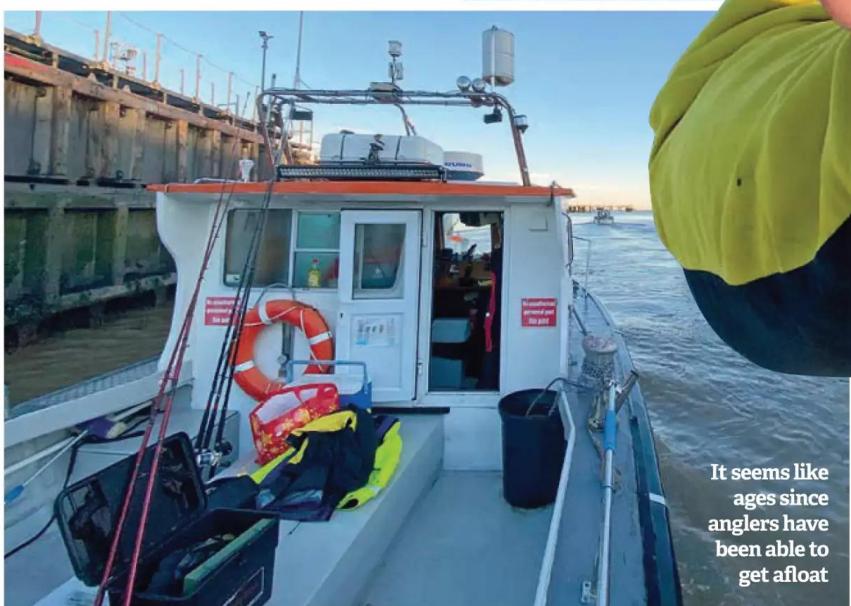
This is a simple and effective presentation that caught loads of cod this winter, when we were allowed to fish before lockdown.

My mate Roger Cooling has his boat moored in Grimsby, which gives us access to the River Humber, a winter haven for cod and codling. Because the tides can be quite fierce here at times, getting plenty of scent into the water is essential in order to have a successful day's fishing. For this reason, coupled with the



Plenty of cod in the 6-9lb range fell to double squid baits

Even a 5lb cod will take a double squid bait



It seems like ages since anglers have been able to get afloat





smaller-sized squid, we were doubling up our baits this winter. The cod up here love squid baits. We've tried cocktails of squid and worm, both frozen blacks and fresh blow lug, but plain squid baits seem to take the larger cod and indeed numbers of fish.

Of course, this presentation is equally effective from the shore and one I have used countless times on Pennell pulley rigs to catch cod and bass from my local Norfolk and Lincolnshire beaches over the years (remember when we used to get decent runs of cod?).

ADVANTAGES

Using plain squid baits can provide a number of advantages, too. For a start, you are more likely to nab a rogue winter bass on a whole squid. In fact, in January 2020 I managed to nail one of 9lb while fishing a squid bait for cod. A whole squid is also less prone to being ripped off the hook by hungry whiting. The addition of bait elastic when you double up also reduces the chances of the whiting tearing your bait to shreds.

You'll notice that when I use this double squid method I always ensure that the hook point passes through at least one of the squid's eyes to release even more scent into the water. ▶

STEP-BY-STEP

HOW TO PREPARE A DOUBLE SQUID BAIT



You'll need a Pennell rig made with a sliding top hook. These are size 5/0 Sakuma Manta Extra with the top one being a dedicated Pennell hook.



Start by laying the two squid alongside each other. It helps if the two squid are a similar size. Wrap a little bait elastic around the tail ends to secure.



Holding the squid firmly in one hand, use your other hand to wrap the bait elastic along the squid bodies to begin the process of binding them together.



When you get to the end of the squid mantles, turn the bait through 180 degrees to carry on whipping up to the head ends.



Give the head end a good dose of elastic, ensuring the longer tentacles are held back along the body. Finish by whipping back up the bodies to the tail end.



To mount the bait, pass the bottom hook (the one tied to the end of your hooklength) into the body of one of the squid. Don't go between the two squid.



Push the hook through the squid like this. If you can nick the second squid during the process, all the better, but it is not essential.



Pull the hook through the squid and all the way out. You will need to pull about eight inches of the hooklength through the body as well.



Now pass the hook point through the exit hole you created, or a millimetre or two below it, as pictured, and continue to 'weave' the squid on the hooklength.



Continue the weaving process and when you reach the bottom of the mantle, pass the hook point through the head and piercing one of the eyes.



Pull the hook through the squid head, but not all the way out – just enough for the eye of the hook to sink into the body of the squid.



Next pull on the hooklength that exits the tail of the squid to bring it up tight so the hook bend sits neatly at the head end of the bait.



Now it's time to secure the sliding top hook of the Pennell. Do this by simply wrapping the hooklength around the shank four times.



Pass the top hook through the two tails of squid whipped together. Then, while holding the bend of the hook, pull the hooklength to tighten it down.



AIR MAIL

Go light for blues

Whether you fish with lures or bait, this species is tailor-made for some superb inshore angling

KOWN BY ANGLERS FISHING IN South Africa as elf or shad, and tailor by those in Australia, bluefish are hugely popular with boat and shore anglers, being regarded as one of the great inshore light-tackle species.

Found within the temperate and near tropical latitudes of the world, bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) are a popular species with boat and shore anglers fishing off the eastern seaboard of the United States and now in several of the southern European countries.



Bluefish average from 6-15lb

The IGFA all-tackle record for a bluefish is currently held with a 31lb 12oz specimen caught off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, in the USA, but the average size of most fish caught is between 6lb and 15lb.

TOP TACTICS

If you are fishing offshore, bluefish can be found in relatively open water but more usually they will be encountered in the vicinity of banks, reefs or tide rips – all areas that concentrate shoals of bait.

Finding the bait upon which the fish are currently feeding is always the key to locating bluefish, and thankfully in those areas where they are found this is rarely a problem. Bluefish blitzes, as they are known, occur when these voracious predators trap a shoal of bait against the surface and set about decimating as many fish as they can. An active blitz can be located easily by spotting the flocks of birds that will always be feeding from above a blitz. Often you can identify the location of a previous blitz by a slick of oil on the surface, and even the pungent smell of fish, confirming bluefish are active in the area.

Whereas boat anglers can actively hunt bluefish then quickly follow the fast-moving shoals from one blitz to the next, shore anglers are not nearly so mobile. If you intend to fish from the shore, good information about the areas that often attract bluefish will always help. These include the mouth and lower reaches of estuaries, tide rips and any rocky platforms that offer access to deep water. Open surf beaches, too, can be very productive.

Almost any lure will prove effective, especially simple silver metal spoons that can be cast a long way. Once when fishing a long, straight sandy beach just to the south of Chatham at the very tip of the Cape Cod peninsula I used a 2-4oz bass rod to cast 3oz mini pirkis, with most casts resulting in a strike from either a bluefish or a striped bass. Surface poppers can be very effective too.

Most types of bait, especially a freeline or slow-trolled live one, are worth trying. Fly-fishing is



another exciting technique, which is popular with many American anglers. Whichever way you decide to fish and regardless of whether or not you use lures or bait, you will need to use wire hooklengths or shock tippets to prevent the fish's razor-sharp teeth from cutting your line.

DESTINATIONS

The best bluefish action I have experienced has been in the US, where the fish are found from the Canadian border down to Florida. During the spring and summer, the fish are prolific off the more northerly states, migrating south through the fall and winter as they track the shoals of baitfish to Chesapeake Bay and the banks off the Carolinas and Georgia. I have caught bluefish while fishing in Florida, but from my experience they are not nearly as abundant there as they are further north.

Bluefish are very common around the Canary Islands, and this is where most UK anglers first experience these fish, usually when spinning from the rocks or, if permitted, local harbour breakwaters. The IGFA 30lb-class record of 28lb 7oz was caught in Tenerife. Other reliable places to target bluefish are southern Spain and Portugal, with the Ebro delta south of Barcelona and other parts of the Catalonia region producing a lot of fish. Here your best chance of success will almost always be when fishing afloat with a guide, but in some areas, fish can be caught on a self-guided basis from the shore.

Further afield The Azores produce some very big bluefish, including several line-class records. Cape Province in South Africa, South Australia and New Zealand also produce plenty of bluefish. ■



Almost any lure will catch a bluefish



Using livebait is a good method

GET DAVE'S BOOK

■ Dave Lewis's latest book, 'Destination Angler 2', features 26 beautifully illustrated chapters covering fishing for many bucket list species, including sharks, at destinations around the world. Cost is £30 plus £3.99 p&p to a UK address. Contact: david.lewis21@hotmail.com


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RE0092	L
RE0093	XL
RE0094	2XL
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Century think the Fireblade ticks all the right boxes for someone who has an interest in an entry-level top end rod brand but also has a wife and kids to feed. Century haven't compromised with the brand's name that stands for performance and this rod will not disappoint.

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CN0092	Tip Tornado Sport	13ft 6	4-8oz	2	£430.00
CN0058	Eliminator T1000	14ft 10	4-8oz	2	£599.00
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SO0625	Shore	14ft	5-7oz	2	£329.99
SO0626	Beach	15ft 4	4-8oz	3	£349.99

TRONIXPRO Xenon Travel Beachcaster

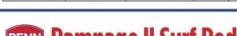

The Xenon Travel is the perfect travelling companion for the worldwide angler. It breaks down into six sections, meaning it will fit easily into most hold luggage cases. This small package makes it convenient for taking on family holidays where room for a fishing tackle is limited.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX6220	12ft 6	3-6oz	6	£164.99	£149.99

Leeda ICON FXD Beach Rods

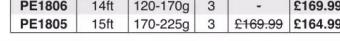

- Made from Torayco® carbon
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CODE	MDL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
LD14565	Elite	14ft	100-200g	3	£349.99	£195
LD14566	Elite	15ft	100-200g	3	£359.99	£195


PENN Squadron II SW Spinning Rods

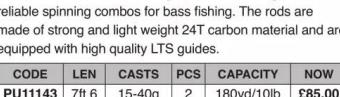

A modern design with advanced sporting performance, the Penn Squadron II SW Spin is a solid, durable and lightweight blank and packs plenty of casting power for saltwater lure fishing.

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PE1831	8ft	15-40g	2	£55.99
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SONIK Black Shore Rods


The SKS Black Shore Rods bring the world of top end surf rods to a whole new accessible level.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SO0244	Multiplier	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0245	Multiplier	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0246	Multiplier	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99
SO0360	Fixed Spool	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0361	Fixed Spool	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0362	Fixed Spool	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99

Abu Garcia Max Pro Bass Spinning Combo


The MAX PRO combos are light, modern, strong and reliable spinning combos for bass fishing. The rods are made of strong and light weight 24T carbon material and are equipped with high quality LTS guides.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU11143	7ft 6	15-40g	2	180yds/10lb	£85.00	
PU11146	9ft	15-40g	2	210yds/14lb	£90.00	
PU11147	9ft	30-80g	2	210yds/14lb	£102.99	

Leeda ICON M-Sport Rods

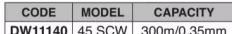

The ICON M-Sport Rod range punches well above its price bracket, boasting features of rods twice the price; such as action, bite detection and casting ability.

CODE	MDL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
LD15423	Match	13ft 10	4-6oz	2	£179.99	
LD15424	Power	13ft 10	5-7oz	2	£179.99	
LD15425	Ultra	13ft 10	6-8oz	2	£179.99	


Daiwa 20 Crosscast Surf QD Reel

The Crosscast Surf SCW QD reel is an ideal '4x4' for long distance surfcasting. The ultra-long 45mm (45 SCW model) spool stroke is designed for distance casting and offers massive retrieving power.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
DW11140	45 SCW	300m/0.35mm	£125.00	£110.00
DW11141	35 SCW	300m/0.35mm	£99.99	£90.00


Daiwa 20 BG MQ Reels

Daiwa's BG series has changed the game of what affordable quality looks like in heavy-duty spinning reels. Now, by combining Monocoque Body (MQ) technology with the mass market appeal of BG, 20 BG MQ is born.

CODE	MDL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
DW11132	5000D-H	300m/0.22mm			£220.00	
DW11133	6000D-H	300m/0.16mm			£220.00	
DW11134	8000-H	300m/0.28mm			£230.00	
DW11135	10000-H	300m/0.33mm			£230.00	


MIKADO Litus Continental Surfcast Reel

Litus is a high-class reel that fulfils the dreams of the pickiest surfcasting anglers with its state-of-the-art construction.

CODE	CAPACITY
MK1352	0.40mm/320m

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Q&A

SHORE ANGLING

ASK THE EXPERTS

When sending your question, please remember to include your name and address



PAUL FENECH

Shore angler and tackle expert Paul is here to solve your shore angling problems.



DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.



MARK CRAME

Suffolk-based Mark gets a thrill from fishing afloat on a kayak. Send him your kayaking queries.



HENRY GILBEY

Angler and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, will answer questions on lure angling.



DAN SISSONS

The Portsmouth angler will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK A US QUESTION

■ Email: sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
or online: www.facebook.com/seaanglermag

Q I've been fishing the local north-facing beaches in Cornwall but the problem I'm having is detecting bites when there's a swell running because the waves keep moving my rod tip. Can you advise how to avoid this?

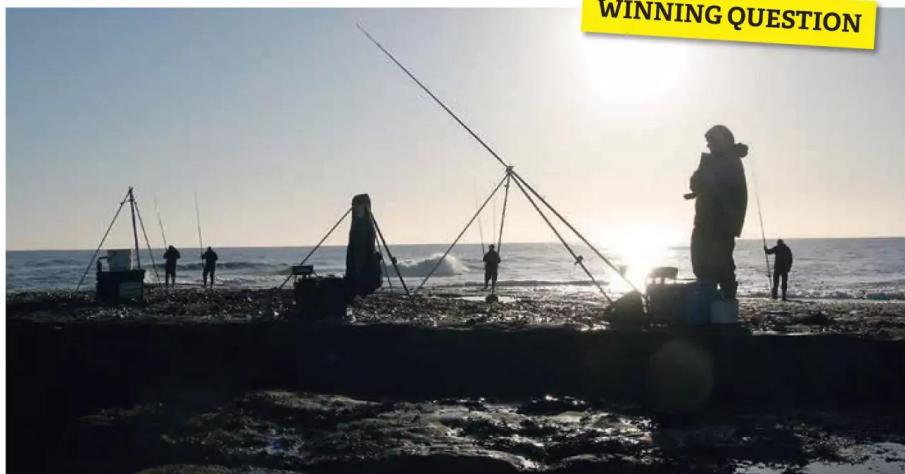
STEVE BAXTER, NEWQUAY, CORNWALL

PF says: Almost all shore anglers will encounter this at some point when fishing into a swell or rough sea. The best way is to position the rod in the tripod as high as possible, enabling your mainline to be above the waves. This, however, depends on the strength of the wind because it may continually blow over the rod-rest.

The best way is to focus on the movement of the rod tip as it bounces with the wave action. It will soon become apparent that there is a rhythm in the tip action and any other movement different to that is generally a bite. Another good tip is to watch for your mainline falling slack. In many cases when a fish grabs the bait, it often springs a grip weight from its firm hold and results in a slack line or drop-back bite.

Failing that you could resort to holding the rod, as some of the anglers are doing in the picture (below), and placing the mainline between your thumb and forefinger and feeling for a bite. This will generally be a strong pull and is how I used to do it when I first started shore fishing.

WINNING QUESTION



Q Could you give me some advice on buying a new headlamp for shore fishing?

SEAN GRAVES, SOUTHAMPTON, HANTS

PF says: There are plenty of options for you to choose from, but before making your decision I would recommend buying one that is rechargeable to save on cost of buying batteries.

I use the Fenix HM65R (right) and have had it a few years now and it's probably one of the most reliable head torches I've ever had; believe me, I've had a few over the years. It is incredibly bright, lightweight and lasts a full five or six-hour session easily.

Fenix has recently released a new version called the Shadowmaster, however, I haven't used this but

have been reliably informed that it is excellent. It's a good idea to have a back-up headlight just in case your main source fails or runs out of juice. The Tronixpro headlight is excellent and will pack away into your tackle box with taking up too much room.





Q I have bought some ragworm lures to use when I can't purchase fresh bait. Can you tell me if these are effective and, if so, for which shore species?

LEE ROBERTS, BY EMAIL

PF says: I think you're referring to those resembling the Isome worms or Berkley Gulp Nereis versions. These are more traditionally used for light rock fishing (LRF) when targeting mini species and can actually be very effective. I did hear of

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



some North East anglers using them with some success as a bottom bait to target flounders in a local estuary.

Although these worms are made from a synthetic material, they have an uncanny resemblance to actual ragworms and actually come in an added scent. They even produce the same wriggling action too. Whether or not the scent is what actually attracts a fish, I'm not so sure, but the movement almost certainly will as most fish are incredibly inquisitive creatures and will react to any motion and treat it as prey.

For me, I would stick to using fresh, prime bait when you can; it will out-fish any artificial alternatives when bottom fishing. It might pay dividends to have a word with your local tackle dealer about placing a standing order for a regular supply of fresh bait.

Q I have a new three-piece beach rod which is hard to pull apart. Is there anything I can do to make it easier to dismantle?

PETER ADAMS, WORCESTER PARK, SURREY

PF says: You could try adding your own adhesive grip tape close to where the rods are joined, which will certainly help when trying to separate the sections. This common problem often occurs when the rods are put together when the spigot is wet. As each section slides together, it can sometimes create a vacuum that in turn makes it incredibly difficult to pull apart.

Spigots are made from carbon and like everything else will suffer wear and tear over years of use. A vacuum can happen when a spigot is worn and slightly loose when fitted together. This can be remedied by applying a light coating of graphite spray to build it up slightly, or,

after each session, give the spigot a rub with some candle wax. This will help the sections to remain together firmly with no wobble at the join and help to part the sections when your session is over.

There have been many occasions when I've seen two anglers pulling at a shore rod to part the sections. Both need to have a firm grip on the blank and one angler slowly twists one way as the other angler slowly twists in the opposite direction. Most modern three-piece rods do come ready prepared for this and actually have rough textured areas around the joins to help when parting a rod.



Q How many lead weights should I take with me for a single shore session?

BRIAN HANRATTY, BY EMAIL

PF says: It depends on the venue and how long you will be there. If you are fishing into seriously rough ground, it is inevitable that you will suffer losses. Even mediocre mixed ground will occasionally claim a few sinkers. Take into account any possible crack-offs while casting too. Calculate the number of casts during a session based on 15 minutes between each. That's four per hour and 20 in a five-hour session. It's unlikely that you will lose a sinker on every cast, so I'd take 10 sinkers.



WIN SUFIX AND RAPALA PRIZES WORTH £170

Each month we'll award a prize to the best shore, boat and lure/LRF question.



■ The shore winner receives two spools of Sufix Tritanium Neon Orange 0.35mm mainline, two spools of 80lb Sufix Zippy Shockleader and two spools of Sufix Shock Max 0.18mm-0.50mm tapered shockleader worth £52.



■ The boat winner receives a 300m spool of Sufix 50lb X8 Stealth Green braid and a 250m spool of Sufix 50lb Matrix Pro braid worth £53.

■ The lure/LRF winner receives five of the new Rapala MaxRap lures worth £65



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T&Cs: * One prize per winning question will be chosen by the editor. Prizes cannot be exchanged and no correspondence will be looked into. We reserve the right to send alternative prizes.

TRONIXPRO

The new Tronixpro Luggage range has been developed to ensure shore and boat anglers have a quality, hard-wearing, well-designed range of luggage to carry and organise all of their kit. This redeveloped range features upgraded material with the use of 420D Oxford Nylon. A tough, durable, water-resistant, and wipe clean material that is ideal for use in saltwater and damp conditions. There is a wide range of luggage for all uses in the range, including rucksacks, quivers, lead bags, reel and spool cases, rig wallets, match organisers, cool bags and much more.



Q&A

LIGHT ROCK FISHING



Q: I am looking for a boat suitable for inshore lure fishing. My current vessel has a small cabin at the bow and it cuts off half of my casting space. Will I have to sacrifice comfort for a better angling platform?

PAUL WILSON, HERNE BAY, KENT

DS says: Firstly, as I'm sure you're aware, budget is everything. It's possible to import boats from the States that are offshore lure-specific craft but this is very expensive. What I did was to look at what was available overseas and then find a boat that shared some of the ingredients that make a lure boat viable.

Stability is key because you don't want an unstable platform. Any open boat or centre-console version can take on water at sea so, during a sea trial, test how wet you will get. Consider if you will be fishing alone or with others. For instance, small boats are fine at anchor when two anglers are sitting down but lure fishing seems to take up more space when you are standing.

Lastly, look at storage space for all the stuff that you currently keep in a cabin. It's all got to go somewhere.

Q: Having spent a good deal of time fishing offshore wrecks for pollack and bass, I'd like to use lighter tackle for more sport. What rod and reel would suit fishing in up to 10 metres depth over broken rock?

DANIEL HARRIS, SEAFORD, EAST SUSSEX

DS says: Exploring broken ground with a boat within 500 yards of the shore is where lure fishing comes into its own. It is beyond casting distance from the shore and often an area ignored by many bait anglers.

I have so many outfits that would suit fishing in 20 feet of water, ranging from five gram ultra-light rods to 40g bait casting versions. To keep it simple, I'd say a practical combination is a 7-21g medium/fast-action rod about 7ft long, coupled with a 3000 size fixed-spool reel.

Line wise I'd use 0.6PE braid. This will cover most scenarios and, if you fish vertically, will handle more than its casting weight.

If you can fish slack water or an area with little tidal flow, you should be able to go really light. This is when a rod that has the potential to fish on the lighter side will be very beneficial.



Q&A

LURE FISHING

WINNING QUESTION

Q: I've heard about bass being caught at night on lures, but are any other species possible?

MARTIN HARPER, CRAGHEAD, COUNTY DURHAM

HG says: Bass are the main species we target at night on lures. Indeed, I would suggest that targeting bass at night has changed a lot of anglers' fishing for the better. During calmer and clearer conditions is when I look either to estuaries and some current or the open coast in the dead of night chasing bass with my lure gear.

I have caught a fair number of pollack at night, including foul-hooking one of 8lb a few years ago which I thought was the bass of several lifetimes until I got my headlamp on the fish. For the most part I am fishing fairly shallow ground at night and, for me, this doesn't tend to be conducive to pollack.

Another species that anglers chase with lure gear is the wrasse, but ballans don't really feed at night and I can't recall ever seeing or catching one in darkness.

For me, night fishing with lures in our waters is all about bass. It can feel strange to stand or wade in the dark and cast a lure when your head tells you that the fish can't see it. But I believe that bass can locate your lure in darkness just as easily as during daylight.

The key is confidence that you are doing the right thing and not wasting valuable sleep by wandering around our coastline when most other people are tucked up in bed. The only way I know to get a big dose of confidence is to catch a fish on lures



at night. You only need that one hit and resulting hook up to know that you are doing it properly.

The trick is to fish the same locations as you would during the day, but do so at night when conditions are calm, quiet and dark. Don't go wading if you don't need to because the bass can be so close in sometimes. Keep at it because once night fishing becomes the norm you won't look back. Night lure fishing for bass is as normal to me now as going out during the day.

Q: I have found a high cliff with a rocky base jutting into the sea that might hold bass. It faces north and is in the shade most of the time and is a bit tricky to reach from the shore. Further round the cliff is a colony of seals. Should I give it a try?

IAN HODGKISS, PENRHYN BAY, CONWY

HG says: I see no reason why this spot shouldn't be worth a try, but please take it easy when getting there.

I like the fact that you would be in shade most of the time because direct sunlight in calmer conditions aren't my favourite combination.

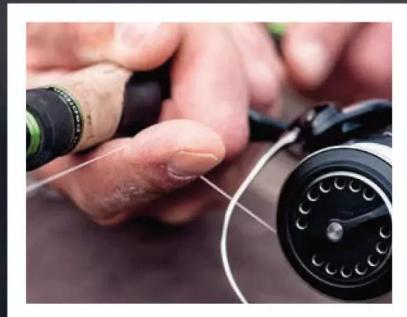
I would imagine that you might find a nice run of current at some states of the tide if, as you say, the rocky base juts out into the sea. Yes, I'd have a go and see what happens.

While I know that a lot of anglers don't like seeing seals around because they reckon the bass get spooked, I'm not so sure about this. I remember one of the first times I went lure fishing for bass in Ireland and I saw three seals within casting range. My heart dropped but my fishing partner told me this was perfect because the seals would keep the bass close. He was right and we caught plenty of fish. If there are seals around then it makes sense that there is plenty of food nearby. Seals do eat bass, but I am sure that they also share a taste for crabs, sandeels and blennies and so on.



Q: I want to buy some braid for bass fishing. What is the best breaking strain?

ADAM GILES, ROEHAMPTON, LONDON



HG says: This is a subject that anglers could debate until the cows come home, but I can make life easy and suggest you go for a braid of about 20lb breaking strain.

For me, a four-strand or eight-strand braid around that breaking strain gives a good balance of diameter, strength, castability and at least a bit of useful abrasion resistance.

Not all 20lb braids are remotely equal by the way, so when I say go for a

20lb braid what I actually mean is look for a line around that figure and then make sure the quoted diameter is somewhere around the 0.15mm-0.19mm region. If it has a PE rating, go for PE1 to PE5. Some lines are not always accurate.

I can't see how any lure angler could go wrong by filling their reel with a 120-metre spool of 20lb/0.15mm Sufix 832 braid, and using backing to get to the required line level.



Q&A

BOAT ANGLING

Q: Having caught most of our various species of ray, I'd love to add a spotted to my species list. Any advice?

ALAN WYATT, CHIP PENHAM, WILTSHIRE



WINNING QUESTION

DL says: Spotteds are one of the smaller species of ray, being distinguished from small blonde ray by the numerous distinctive spots, which unlike the blonde, do not extend all of the way to the edge of the wings.

Spotted rays start to make an appearance in spring, with numbers of fish remaining abundant throughout the summer and autumn, before they migrate offshore into deeper water offering a more stable temperature for the cold winter months.

The most productive areas for spotted rays include the English Channel, particularly between Dorset and Land's End, the Bristol Channel, Cardigan Bay, Irish Sea and numerous marks off the coast of Ireland and Scotland. They



can be caught over a wide range seabed types. They are usually found in areas where the bottom consists of a mix of sand or gravel along with patches of rougher ground, and especially in coloured water typically found within the vicinity of estuaries.

Because these rays are common in areas of sand, mud and shingle banks, which invariably are subjected to a fast run of tide, uptiding is a productive technique. In deeper water, fishing downtide is very effective. The key at all times is to ensure that your bait is fishing stationary on the seabed.

The running leger is the perfect rig for both uptide and downtide fishing. Depending on the type and size of your

Fish baits, like mackerel, are best

bait, the hooklength should terminate in either a single hook or a Pennell rig. The Sakuma 545 Manta Extra pattern in size 2/0 to 3/0 is perfect.

Spotted rays can be caught on a variety of baits, with those that are fish based, such as a long, thin, fillet or chunk of mackerel, being a popular choice. Herring, a sandeel, launce and pretty much any other type of fish all work well.

Squid and cuttlefish will also catch spotted rays. Shellfish baits are very effective too, especially razorfish, clams and mussels. Over rougher ground, especially if fishing in coloured water, you can try a peeler crab.

Q: How do I get a hermit crab out of the shell and put it on a hook, and which species are they effective for?

DUNCAN GRANT, WOKING, SURREY

DL says: Hermit crabs are a widely available and easy to obtain in many areas, but few anglers use them, which is a shame as they are an excellent bait. The crabs live in a whelk shell, which provides a very tough and secure sanctuary.

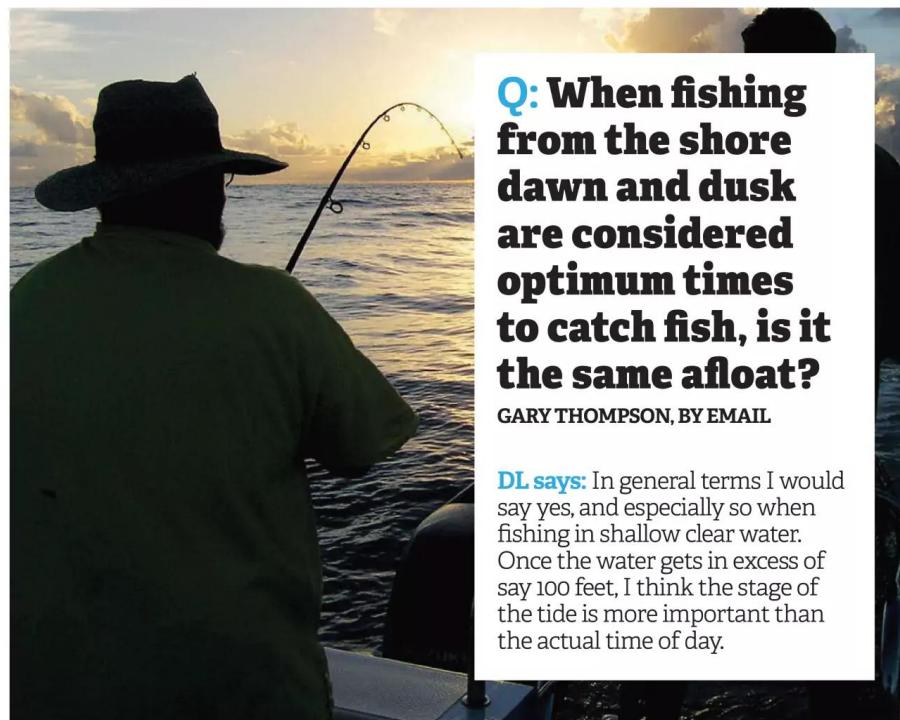
Kept in a bucket of cool sea water one or two hermit crabs will eventually exit the shell, which is really convenient. Hermit crabs freeze well and once fully defrosted are easily pulled out of the shell.

When it is necessary to extract a live hermit crab from its shell, most anglers use something to physically break the

shell, such as a hammer. If you do use a hammer obviously ensure the shell is on a bait board, ideally resting on several old towels to help cushion the noise, which in shallow water will spook fish.

To present a hermit crab, use bait elastic to securely lash the whole crab to the hook, making sure that the hook point remains exposed and clear, and cannot become masked by the bait. If fishing for smaller fish, use only the soft body part of the crab, again using elastic to secure it to a hook.

Hermit crabs are a very effective bait for many species of fish, especially smoothhounds, bass and various rays, notably the stingray.



Q: When fishing from the shore dawn and dusk are considered optimum times to catch fish, is it the same afloat?

GARY THOMPSON, BY EMAIL

DL says: In general terms I would say yes, and especially so when fishing in shallow clear water. Once the water gets in excess of say 100 feet, I think the stage of the tide is more important than the actual time of day.

Q: On a trip off the Dorset coast last year, I caught what looked like a small bright red eel. What was it?

ANDREW NAYLOR, RICHMOND, LONDON

DL says: From your description, I am certain it was a red band fish. These live in localised colonies and the Dorset coast, especially Weymouth, consistently produces these beautiful and rarely seen fish. Small, baited lures, such as sabikis, are used by species hunters to target them.



The eel-like red band fish

Q: I want to buy an electric outboard engine for stealth fishing in shallow, inshore waters. Are these suitable for using in saltwater?

GORDON ATKINS, BOSTON, LINCS

DL says: I have seen numerous electric outboards used in saltwater abroad, notably in destinations that focus on flats fishing. One or two manufacturers do produce electric outboards specifically for use in saltwater. Take a look those from Minn Kota or Torqueedo.



An outboard powered by electricity

Q&A

KAYAK FISHING

Q: I'm looking to buy a kayak. Who are the main manufacturers of sit-on-top vessels and what are the key products associated with each brand?

Bradley Stringer, Durham, County Durham

MC says: The waters have muddied considerably in the eight years or so since I was involved in the business. At the time the main players were the market leaders Ocean Kayak, Wilderness Systems, RTM which were traditionally paddled kayaks, with Hobie as the only option for a pedal kayak. Glassfibre Kaskazi and Stealth kayaks were also popular, being imported from South Africa by enthusiasts.

At the time, Ocean Kayak models were imported from the US and New Zealand but the exchange rate kept dropping which put up prices. Eventually, Johnson Outdoors, the parent company, went from having UK and European offices to external distribution. This coincided with an influx of cheaper fishing kayaks coming out of Chinese factories, such as Galaxy, and an increase by the Canoe Shops Group of its own importation of Feelfree kayaks. Additionally, the second-hand



market became larger and more affordable so the sales of new kayaks slowed except when a new design was unveiled.

Looking at the UK market now, Hobie has become a very popular brand among a majority of the hardcore veterans with the Outback and Revolution ranges being the main ones. For premium brand paddle kayaks, look at the Wilderness Systems Tarpon range, the RTM Rytmo and Tempo, Perception Triumph, Viking Profish (above) and Ocean Kayak Prowler (below) and Trident options. The Feelfree Moken range are a popular starter option too.

In terms of the eBay imports, I can't really comment other than to say that you should consider length, width and features and take your pick.



Q: What is the best length for a sea-going fishing kayak and why?

Simon Norton, Felixstowe, Suffolk

MC says: I feel that the best kayak available new on the market is the RTM Tempo (below) in terms of seagoing capability, based as it is on the original Ocean Kayak Scupper Pro which was discontinued. I have both and won't part with either of them.

These are slim kayaks, a shade under 15ft long, and therefore cut through the water beautifully. Initially more tippy than the wider kayaks out there, they have excellent

secondary stability and can handle a rough sea better than most other fishing kayaks.

I have always favoured 15-footers and I like my kayaks light (which these are, relatively). I started in an Ocean Kayak Prowler 15, which was an excellent fishing platform and then moved to the wider, higher volume Trident 15. I also have an RTM Rytmo of similar length.

These allow me to battle wind or strong current easier than shorter or wider kayaks

because they track and glide better as well as sitting nicely when anchored in current. They do, however, take up more space in your garden and overhang more on your car.

That said, 13ft has always been the most popular length in the UK for some reason. I believe the Ocean Kayak Prowler 13 is still the best-selling sit-on-top fishing kayak there has been. They are good craft, still long enough to battle a decent sea while being a bit more compact and more manoeuvrable.

To be honest, I would say that anything of 13ft and above that isn't too wide is suitable for most conditions in the UK year-round. Any shorter and you start to restrict the conditions you can tackle, which is only important if you wish to tackle them of course. I've fished with lures for bass from 7ft surf kayaks on a flat day so anything is possible if you set your mind to it.



THE ROAD TO SUCCESS PART 12

Words by John Holden

HANDLING BIG LEADS

Find out if you have got the correct tackle and technique for casting with heavier weights



Can you step up to using heavier leads?

How much lead can we cast before running out of steam or busting the rod? Well, that depends on several things including casting method, personal strength and our tackle choice. Bait comes into it as well, for it alone can be a hefty load.

Cutting to the chase, though, the simple answer is that if angler and rod can whack out 150g of lead plus a decent cod

or ray bait without trouble, increasing the lead to 210g shouldn't be an issue. Heaving that much weight feels different and initially quite worrying, perhaps, but you soon get used to it.

From the tackle point of view – the bottom line being whether or not the rod will snap – there isn't much risk with mainstream beachcasters, by which I mean a 12-14ft rod with 4-6oz casting rating and designed for all-round fishing. For obvious reasons this advice excludes specialist rods such as those with ultra-delicate match tips.

Nicely balanced tackle and a clean technique are the key to safe, steady performance. Ultimately, the caster's strength is the big limitation but that is rarely an issue on the beach. Owing to the higher loads involved, it may sometimes be necessary to alter the sinker drop and swing/layout angles, shift the reel to the bottom of the handle and use a thumb/finger protector to provide a better grip on the reel.

PHYSICAL LIMIT

So why is 150g the physical limit for so many anglers? The two killer reasons



A rod with a 4-8oz (120-340g) casting rating



Technique matters for casting big weights

are putting in too much power too early often in combination with a dodgy technique, and using a rod that's too long, too quick and too stiff. We can and do get away with murder up to about 150g, which helps explain why so many anglers manage quite well with dodgy styles and inappropriate gear. But it takes only a bit more lead weight to wreck this fragile system, leaving many people unable to step up a gear when things turn rough.

Poor casters almost inevitably being rushers and thrashers, the increased resistance caused by extra lead destroys whatever control they do have. The quick cure is to use a slow, smooth start. A bit more leader drop sometimes helps. If the rest of the cast that follows is reasonably competent, slowing down is all we have to do. So far so good.

But slowing down won't save a really poor technique, especially when it's hamstringing by the wrong rod. The first move certainly feels better but then we get to the main power stage, and suddenly the house falls down. Welcome to the world of leverage. If the rod is too long and too stiff, and/or technique is weak, the load becomes too heavy to handle. At that point, the rod leaves its proper rounded plane and comes straight overhead. Pendulum casters call it cutting the corner. The result is a low cast usually to the left, burned thumb and a massive backlash. The cure is better technique and a rod that matches your skill and power. Get those right, and you can cast the kitchen sink. ■



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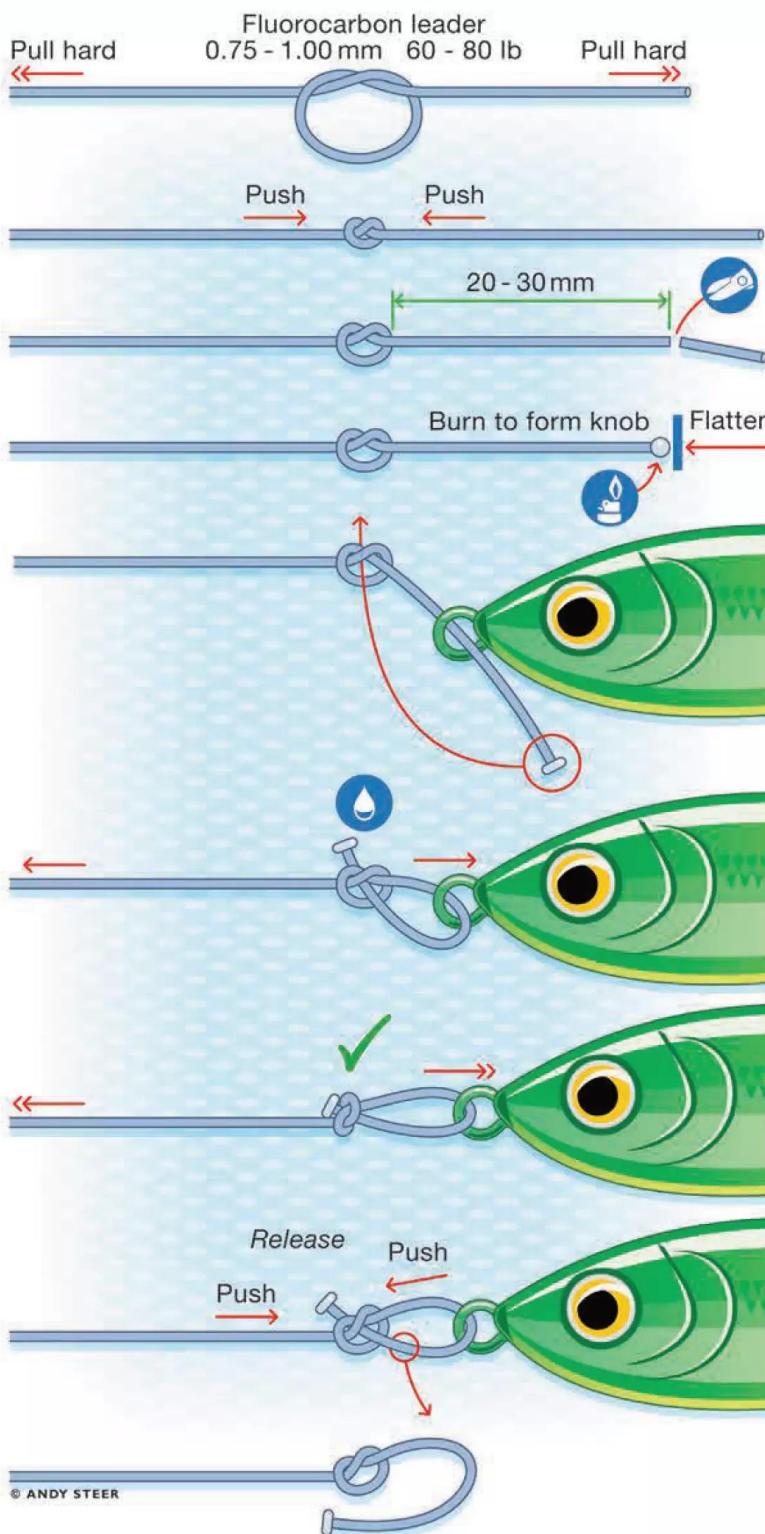
SEA SCHOOL

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR ANGLING SKILLS

Artwork by Andy Steer

KNOTS FOR LURES

Check out these simple techniques for attaching a leader to your lure

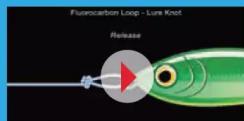


Fluorocarbon loop lure knot

Here a reusable loop knot is used to connect a fluorocarbon leader to lures and terminal tackle. It works best with fluorocarbon of 0.75-1.00mm (60-80lb).

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Form an overhand knot in the leader and pull the ends.
- 2 Push both ends of line back towards the knot to create small hole.
- 3 Trim the line 20-30mm from the knot.
- 4 Melt end of leader with a lighter and flatten the blob.
- 5 Pass blobbed end through eye of lure (or lure clip) and back through knot.
- 6 Moisten leader and tighten the knot.
- 7 The tag should be tight against the knot, as shown.
- 8 To remove lure, push both ends of line to release the blobbed end.
- 9 The leader ready for another lure.



Video: <https://youtu.be/q2uSDAy5Fs>

SEA FISHING KNOTS - FROM THE REEL TO THE HOOK

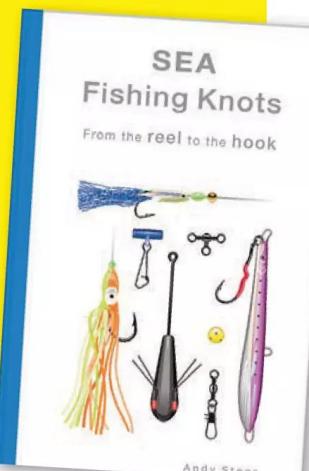
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Get the eBook: www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00S72QYX0/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_FK.MFbZ4TKN89

Contains clear, concise, easy to follow step-by-step knot-tying illustrations of recommended sea fishing/big-game fishing knots and set-ups.

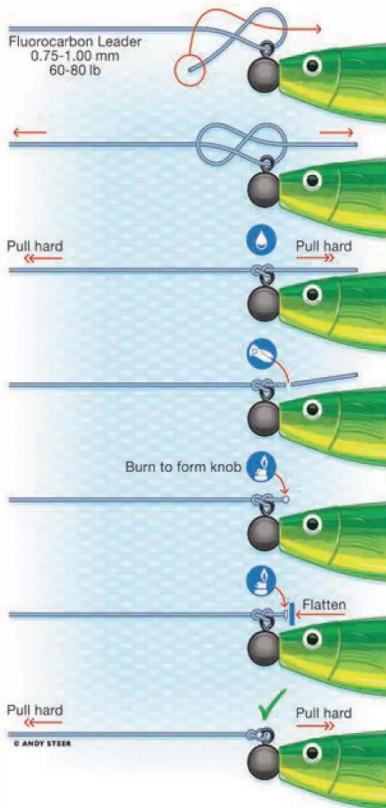
This publication should help you to gain a solid base of reliable, tried and tested knots, enabling you to land more fish. It will also help you protect the environment and save money by losing less tackle.

Disclaimer: No responsibility in any way is accepted for incidents arising from the use of this material.



Fluoro figure of eight knot

Run out of lure clips or don't use them? This figure of eight knot is a very simple and efficient way to connect a fluorocarbon leader to lures and terminal tackle. It works best with real fluorocarbon of 0.75-1.00mm diameter (60-80 lb).



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Pass the leader into eye on lure and loop line back towards you, ready to pass end through the loop you have created.
- 2 Take line through the loop and pull both ends of the fluorocarbon.
- 3 Moisten the line and pull the knot tight.
- 4 Trim the tag end of the fluorocarbon.
- 5 Melt the tag end with a lighter to form a blob.
- 6 Flatten the blob against a hard surface.
- 7 Pull on the line and lure to tighten fully.

Do fish see your line?

Decoding research and manufacturer claims



The writer, Tyler Brinks is a tournament angler and writer from Washington State

THERE IS definitely confusion surrounding the colour and types of line with regard to how they are seen underwater. While nothing is certain, there are some key truths for anglers looking for the best choice, writes Tyler Brinks. Each type has its benefits and should be included in your arsenal but when it comes to being seen underwater, here is what I have found out about each one.

MONOFILAMENT

The most popular type of line is monofilament. Most colours are marketed as either being hard for fish to detect underwater or easier for anglers to see above water.

High-vis yellow is good for lure anglers who watch their line to detect bites. The downside is that it's more visible to the fish, but it is a good choice for dirty water. The benefit of say lure anglers being able to detect bites may outweigh any possible reduction in bites from line-wary fish.

Red line is also easy to see above water and said to become invisible underwater, but divers tell me that red objects turn black. Adding to the confusion is the fact that companies producing red hooks say these generate more bites because they look like blood. Green is a good for blending into the water but may be more visible than clear in very clear water.

Overall, green is a good choice for many situations, while clear is better if you are concerned about fish being able to see your line underwater. Clear blue line is relatively unseen underwater, but the blue tint makes it easier to see above water.

FLUOROCARBON

Touted as the most invisible line, this is the one to use in clear water and, theoretically, will lead to increased bites from spooky fish. Makers of pink fluorocarbon claim this tint is hard

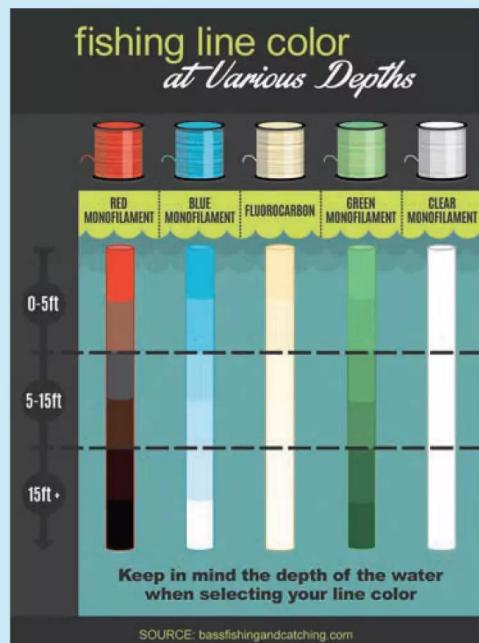
to detect. There is some truth to the claim because scientific studies and accounts of divers have shown that pink loses its colour at various depths.

BRAID

While there are many benefits to using braided line, being undetected by fish is not one of them. It offers excellent strength for its thin diameter, casts well and does not stretch, making it a good choice for fishing around heavy cover and in dirty water. To get the most out of your braid, use a fluorocarbon leader.

VERDICT

Fluorocarbon is the most invisible underwater, while braid is the strongest yet most visible. Colours such as yellow and red are easier to see above water but more likely to be seen underwater by wary fish. ■



SOURCE: bassfishingandcatching.com

How line colour is seen at various depths



The best line to choose for water conditions



OUR DESIGNERS HAVE NOW GONE FURTHER, SO THAT YOU CAN TOO.

Our SURF editions are designed for it; casting further with ease. Thanks to precision line lay from Slow Cross Wrap, each cast will seamlessly fly at speed, aided too by the 'LC' spool design. The twin lip of 'LC' spools provides the minimum of resistance and control on the line release to keep the line travel narrow and even. The result is reduced backlash and smoother line travel through the guides; delivering that improved distance you are seeking. The SCW Surf choice starts with the Crosscast in 35mm or 45mm options with the Emblem and unmistakable Basia in 45mm. Slow Cross Wrap + 'LC' Long Cast: getting you there.



SLOW// CROSS WRAP + 'LC' Long Cast



19 Emblem SURF 45 SCW QD
RRP £175.00



20 Crosscast SURF 45 SCW QD
RRP £125.00



20 Crosscast SURF 35 SCW QD
RRP £99.99



BASIA SURF 45 SCW QD
lb. (DIA,mm)-m(yds.) 5 (0.18)-300(330)

20 Basia SURF 45 SCW QD
RRP £650

FIRST LOOK

Your update on the latest gear arriving in the tackle shops



GEMINI ROLLING SWIVELS

RRP: FROM £2.50 PER PACK

New to the Gemini product range are these stainless-steel rolling swivels. Made from premium marine grade stainless steel, they offer unbelievable strength to size ratio compared to traditional brass or nickel versions.

These swivels are extremely corrosion resistant. Because they are stronger than traditional brass versions, anglers can use a much smaller swivel without compromising on strength and reliability.

Sizes available are size 8, 60lb, 9.5mm; size 6, 100lb, 12.5mm; size 4, 140lb, 15mm; 45lb snood swivels, 12mm; 80lb mainlines swivels, 16.5mm and 100lb power swivels, 17.5mm.

■ For more information, visit: www.gemini-tackle.co.uk

SHIMANO KAIRIKI 4 BRAID

RRP: £8.49 PER 150M SPOOL

The new Shimano Kairiki 4, which is produced in Japan, is a four-strand braid featuring VT (Valdotian tresse) construction method braiding.

Available in diameters from 0.06mm to 0.315mm with a staggering breaking strength of 29.8kg, it is a very strong and smooth PE line.

Its smoothness and thin diameter contribute to its low water resistance, while the stretch of less than three per cent makes it very sensitive. Being so sensitive and smooth, which also results in a reduction in noise, it is ideal for spinning in saltwater. It is said to be perfect for casting long distances.

Because four-strand braid often feels courser than higher strand versions, it is considered better for cutting through weed and kelp.

There will be two extra colours available in addition to the Mantis Green and Steel Grey, namely a highly visible Orange and Multi Colour. The latter is especially good for fishing at greater depths.

■ For more info, visit: www.shimano.com



RATING SYSTEM

Our testers and reviewers use their experience to evaluate the quality and functionality of tackle to provide independent, credible and authoritative advice for our readers. On some pages, you may see the following endorsements

SeaAngler

RECOMMENDED

SeaAngler

BEST BUY

SeaAngler

5 STAR



Tackle which our testers or reviewers recommend to our audience.

Tackle we believe is the best when tested or reviewed against direct competitor products.

Some products reviewed alone will be awarded a star rating ranging from 0-5.



COX & RAWLE HOOKS

RRP FROM: £2.70 PER PACK

Several new hook patterns have been included in the popular Cox & Rawle range of sea angling products.

They are the Specimen XS, Mutsu Circle, Stinger Extra and the New Crab Hook hook styles.

Being super-sharp and strong, they are designed to target a wide array of species, both big and small.

■ For more info, visit: www.coxandrawle.com

HTO TUNGSTEN WEIGHTS

RRP FROM: £4.39; £6.59; £7.69; £6.59; £6.04

HTO has a range of tungsten weights for light rock fishing.

Its Nail Sinker is designed to be pushed into soft plastic baits to give varying actions, while the Dropshot Weight is for most styles of fishing, especially around a rocky bottom, where the flat base avoids snags.

The cylindrical Skinny Dropshot

Weight is for working through weed, while the pear-shaped Fastach Sinker has a fast-attach hook so weights can be quickly added or changed. The Cheburashka Sinker is for bottom jiggling with soft plastics. Its central pin comes out for attaching the hook.

■ For more info, visit: www.tronixfishing.com



TRONIXPRO GLOW BALLS

RRP: £2.19 PER PACK

A versatile, soft 8mm bead that is equally as attractive in daylight as it is at night.

When fishing in daylight they are brightly coloured just like a normal bead, but when it turns dark they become luminous and send out visual attraction to all inquisitive fish species.

Unlike other beads, these do not have a central hole but are designed to be pushed on to the snood via the hook. This makes them grippy so they will stay in position. Being buoyant, they will add extra attraction and movement to your hooklength through water movement.

■ For more visit: tronixfishing.com



THE KIT YOU NEED FOR...

PLAICE

SHORE ANGLERS LOVE FISHING FOR PLAICE, WHICH ARE HEADING inshore now to feed after their late winter spawning. Not only are they plentiful in some areas, but also they make incredibly good eating. Thankfully, tactics and tackle aren't particularly specialist but there are a few neat tricks to help you achieve more success.



ROD AND REEL

Most modern shore rods and reels are perfect for targeting plaice, but to enjoy more exciting sport it is best to choose an outfit that has a little more finesse and sensitivity.

The Tronixpro Cobra GT three-piece rod is one of the best around. Possessing plenty of power for punching baited

rigs a long way when needed, it also has a super-sensitive tip for spotting bites. By coupling the rod with the Tronixpro Virtuoso XT fixed-spool reel, you have the perfect combination. The reel's smooth, slow oscillation provides a perfect line-lay and it holds easily enough line on the aluminium spool.

■ **TRONIXPRO COBRA GT ROD:**
RRP: £368.49 - £384.99

■ **TRONIXPRO VIRTUOSO XT FIXED-SPOOL REEL:** RRP: £93.49



Spring heralds the first arrivals of plaice to shore marks all around the UK.

Here we show you the correct gear to bring you more success...

RIGS & BAIT

A two-up, one-down rig or a three-up version are very much standard for this type of fishing. However, a one-up, one-down (sometimes known as a two-hook flapper) is the most successful choice. For some reason, many shore anglers choose to use a wishbone rig, but it doesn't really provide any great advantage over using flapper rigs.

Many shore anglers add attraction to their rigs by placing coloured sequins and beads above the bait. Plaice are extremely inquisitive fish and will home in on a flash or colour on the seabed. Sequins and beads are fairly cheap to buy in bulk from most tackle dealers. Plaice can be caught on a huge variety of baits, but black lugworms and ragworms are favourites.



LEAD WEIGHTS

If there is a strong tide, you will need a breakout style of lead weight. As the flow eases, try switching to a watch lead because this will allow your baited rig to move slowly along the seabed. Flatfish, especially plaice, love to chase a meal.

■ WATCH LEAD WEIGHTS:
RRP: £1.10 - £1.60



SHELTER

Spring brings uncertain weather conditions so, it's always best to have some form of protection from the elements while on the beach. A beach shelter or large brolly with wings is the best option because this will completely cover you and all of your kit and keep it protected against wind and rain.

The Salt XT shelter from Shakespeare is a good choice. Being easily erected and firmly held in position with a base skirt that is covered with sand or shingle, it's lightweight too.

■ SHAKESPEARE SALT XT BEACH SHELTER:
RRP: £99.99

BUCKET

Having a bucket filled with water allows you to keep your fish healthy and alive in between casts before returning any plaice you don't intend keeping for the table.

The Tronixpro bucket tray and lid is the best on the market. With a capacity of 27 litres, it has a separate tray inside for extra bait, tackle and accessories.

■ TRONIXPRO
BUCKET, TRAY AND
LID: RRP: £24.99



TRIPOD

If you intend to use two rods, it's a good idea to have a rod-rest tripod with a double head. The Icon Tripod is very stable even in a strong gale.

The double head is coated to prevent your rods from being scratched, while the lower double-cup section allows you to adjust the height of your rods.

■ ICON TRIPOD:
RRP: £34.99

LIGHT AND ADAPTABLE

A flagship rod from Shimano is put through its paces by Dave Wood-Brignall

SHIMANO SURF LEADER ULTRA SFT425BX

RRP: £459.99

SINCE PURCHASING Shimano's flagship Surf Leader Ultra tubular tip version in October, I have used it three or four times a week targeting bass, thornback rays and plaice.

My first impression was that the three-piece rod, which is 4.25 metres (about 14ft) long, was well built, containing a Fuji DPS reel seat and Fuji Low Rider stainless steel, silicon carbide guides. I paired the rod with a Shimano Aero Technium fixed-spool reel loaded with PowerPro Super 8 slick 2 braid.



For my first session I visited a mark at Dungeness in Kent, where I fished into a southerly wind blowing a good 40mph directly into my face. The first few casts with a six ounce lead weight were very impressive, with the rod compressing well from an off-the-ground cast.

I baited a two-hook loop rig with fresh yellowtail lug and cast out around 60 or 70 metres. The tip assumed a nice bend as the tide took up the slack and the wires of the grip weight dug into the seabed. At times the wind was really brutal, yet the tip of the Surf Leader held steady. After 10 to 15 minutes, I had my first bite, which resulted in a school bass of about 2lb. I could feel every shake of the fish's head through the tip of the rod. Over the next hour I landed plenty of bass including a new shore personal best of 5lb 10oz.

CONFIDENCE

Next trip out I fished for rays at a local beach in Kent where you need a good cast to present a large bait among the fish. One large sandeel and strips of herring, bluey and squid were whipped on to a size 4/0 Cox & Rawle Specimen hook on a pulley rig. Even with a slight crosswind I cast this large bait easily to 80-90 metres. As I gained more confidence with this rod, I started loading it up more and managed to cast 120 metres. Bites were very hard to come by, but I landed thornback rays to 12lb 8oz.

I followed that with a session targeting plaice during some very settled conditions near the end of November. The water clarity was excellent and the sea was mirror calm too. This time I fished a two-hook loop rig incorporating size 1 Cox & Rawle Aberdeens, each baited with a yellowtail lug. This mark required a good cast to reach the mud holes located approximately 130 yards from the shore. Having by then used the Shimano Surf Leader for five or six weeks, I had grown in confidence and easily hit the required distance. Within minutes the super-sensitive tip indicated a first bite, which resulted in the first of 10 plaice.

For me this is a rod that ticks a lot of boxes. It's light, very adaptable to most conditions, and good for either large or delicate baits.

It is available in either tubular or solid tip versions of 4.25m and 4.50m. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SHIMANO SURF LEADER ULTRA SFT425BX

- Overall length: 4.25 metres (approximately 14ft)
- Transport length: 149.5cm (approximately 5ft)
- Sections: Three
- Weight: 552 grams (19.47oz)
- Casting weight: 225g maximum
- Guides: Eight, Fuji Low Rider SiC
- Reel seat: Fuji DPS with cast control grip
- Blank: Spiral X & Hi-Power X
- Packaging: Nylon bag
- RRP: £459.99

* Available from all Shimano stockists.

TITAN EXEAT 25 SALOPETTES & SMOCK RRP: FROM £114.99 EACH



If you are looking for a pedigree fishing suit to use either here or abroad, such as in Norway, then the Titan Exeat 25 waterproof and breathable salopettes and smock are what you need.

Titan, which has been making fishing clothing since the early 1990s, has created the latest smock in a new style and with an improved British Exeat fabric. Features include taped and hot air sealed seams, and a tight-fitting hood. The velcro-adjustable cuffs incorporate waterproof elasticated inners. You get two hand-warmer pockets and a roomy breast pocket with concealed pouch for a mobile phone. The thermal, breathable quilt lining provides comfort and warmth.

The salopettes are cut and styled to feature a high chest fit to ensure extra protection from the elements, as well being a generous fit for casting or moving around venues. There are two chest pockets and two hand-warmer pockets, non-slip and adjustable super-stretch shoulder straps and taped and hot air sealed seams. As well as being breathable and fully waterproof, the thermal quilt lining provides insulation and warmth as well as an Exeat anti-wicking strip with drainage eyelets to help when wading below the knee. At the base of the legs, there are Velcro adjustable straps to secure and fasten them around boots or wellingtons, while the large patches at the knees aid durability.

The smock and salopettes, which both display the well-known Titan badge logo, are sold together or as separate garments and are available in combinations of red and navy and in sizes M-XXXL.

■ Available from: www.titan.fishing or tel: 0191 4171686.



Get this superb Leeda Icon fixed-spool reel for just £70

Take advantage of this incredible deal...

THIS MONTH'S OFFER IS THE Leeda Icon 70FD fixed-spool reel. Designed for performing ultra-long casts, it is perfect for using with either mono or braided mainlines.

Featuring two types of aluminium spools, you have the choice of either a shallow or deep version and both are tapered. This coupled with the super-slow oscillation means you have a perfect line-lay that enables you to perform those longer, powerful casts without any drama.

The reel has plenty of guts and it is this strength that allows you to fish at venues that are extremely deep and snaggy. Along with the easy-to-use front-drag system, you can play larger fish such as cod, spurdogs and rays with ease and total control.

Normally, this fixed-spool spinning reel would set you back £99.99 in the shops but, it could be yours today for just £70* – putting a cool £29.99 back into your pocket and a deal you cannot afford to miss.

Ordering couldn't be easier – we've created three easy ways (below). Give the helpful staff at the Fishing Megastore a call, place your order and leave the rest to them. ■

FEATURES

- 10+1 ball bearings
- 4.9:1 gear ratio
- Tapered aluminium spool
- Slow oscillation worm shaft
- Titanium-coated line roller
- CNC handle with EVA grip
- Spare deep & shallow spools available



THREE EASY WAYS TO ORDER

1. LOG ON to the link gac.fishing/00176SA
2. CALL 0141 212 8880 and quote 00176SA
3. BY POST Glasgow Angling Centre, Unit 1, 29 Saracen ST, Glasgow G22 5HT and quote 00176SA

*Please make cheques payable to 'Glasgow Angling Ltd'.

RELY ON
SEA ANGLER
TO BRING YOU
GREAT TACKLE DEALS
EVERY ISSUE

(*P&P FREE)

WIN!

A SONIK GRAVITY X HT SHORE ROD AND AVX 10000 FIXED-SPOOL REEL

SEA ANGLER has teamed up with tackle company Sonik to offer you the chance to win a fantastic shore rod and reel prize worth £479.98.

The Sonik Gravity X5 HT 15ft 4in three-piece shore rod retails at £349.99 and offers fantastic balance, power and lightness to achieve a superb casting performance, as well as sitting perfectly in heavier tides and swells. With a casting rating of 4-8oz, there is plenty of power within the blank to cope with using heavier lead weights.

The hollow tip not only sits perfect in the tide, but it possesses an incredibly quick recovery, allowing you to achieve huge distances even with a simple overhead casting style. Ideal for anglers wanting a true all-round three-piece rod and who prefer not to use a much heavier version, it will certainly cope with a wide variety of species such as smoothhounds, rays, cod and bass.

Accompanying the rod is the super-smooth and highly functional AVX 10000 fixed-spool reel that retails at £129.99. It boasts an incredibly slow oscillation and, together with its long-coned spool, enables a fantastic

line-lay that helps you to gain those ultra-long casts from the beach when needed. Other top features include 14 ball bearings, strong gears and an oversized rubber crank handle for effective retrieval. The sensitive front drag also makes it ideal for using with low diameter lines.

To be in with a chance to win, simply enter the competition free online at shop.kelsey.co.uk/SAC3

One lucky reader drawn at random will win.

worth
£480

To view the whole range of Sonik products visit:
www.soniksports.com



ROD FEATURES

- Super lightweight high modulus carbon blank
- X5 multi-directional nano fibre tip section lay-up
- Fuji Alconite K Series guides
- Fuji corrosion-control frames provide seven-times more corrosion resistance
- Fuji DPS reel fitting
- Shrink wrap on the lower handle to improve grip
- White hollow carbon tip for easy bite detection
- Unground carbon finish at joints makes it easier to take apart

REEL FEATURES

- High strength carbon composite body/rotor
- 14 + 1 stainless shielded bearings
- Instant anti-reverse system
- Long-cast angled spool lip
- Dual strength stainless steel main shaft
- Worm drive for perfect line-lay
- Sensitive front-drag system, ideal for low diameter lines
- Spring-loaded line clip
- Rotor lock with open bale-arm
- Large diameter titanium-coated bale-arm
- Large bale-roller
- Weight 750g

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Entries close at 23.59 on 01/04/2021 and the winners will be drawn on 02/04/2021. Winners will be notified within 28 days of the close of entries. The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry is free. Open to residents of the UK aged over 18. Employees of Kelsey Media and their family members are not eligible to win. Only one entry permitted per person, no bulk entries will be accepted. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. If any prize or product is lost or damaged during the course of delivery to the recipient, Kelsey Media will provide reasonable assistance in seeking to resolve the problem. However, it will not always be possible to obtain replacements for lost or damaged goods and, in that event, no financial compensation would be payable by Kelsey Media or their affiliates. We reserve the right to cancel the competition, if circumstances change that are beyond our control. By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules and agree that your surname and country may be published if you win.

BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Self-confessed Daiwa fan Tony Burman finds a light rod to suit his passion for fishing with multiplier reels

DAIWA AIR SURF 1422MS-AU

RRP: £495

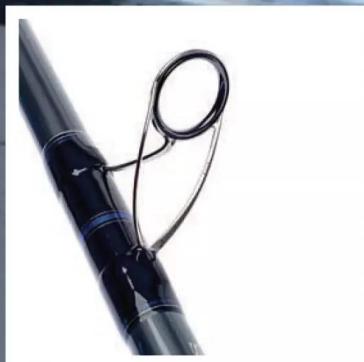
SeaAngler

RECOMMENDED

VER A year ago after an accident which affected my back and a shoulder, I switched to a continental rod to reduce the strain on my torso, but this meant using a fixed-spool reel. What I really wanted was something similarly light and sensitive to use with my favoured multiplier reels.

During more than 50 years of fishing I have always been a fan of Daiwa rods. My first was probably the Moonraker, launched in 1978, and then the Surfcast. I remember buying a 13ft High Performance Beach model too and it was brilliant. When I wanted to buy another rod, I rang up tackle dealer Dave Docwra in Norfolk, who asked me what I was using and how far I was casting. I told him I had an HPB and wanted something to register small fish bites from 150 yards out. He told me to stick with what I'd got.

After that the Amorphous Whisker Beach range appeared (another leap forward in carbon rod technology), and the 129 version was excellent. Then the Amorphous Whisker Tournament versions gained favour with many top match anglers, some of whom still use these today. These very good rods, which seemed far in advance of many on the market at that time, could cast a six-ounce lead weight and bait a long way.





Other brands appeared and, in the eyes of some, probably stole some limelight from the Daiwa products, but I loved the brand and stuck with it.

TOP MODEL

I had a break from saltwater fishing and when I returned Sea Angler magazine held an open day at Cleethorpes. The late great Neil MacKellow was in attendance and helping anglers to improve their casting. The local pranksters were urging me to have a go and, they hoped, snap off in front of the audience. I stepped up with my AWB 129 and faithful Daiwa 7HT reel. I can cast the pendulum, but prefer a round-the-body style, and my lead weight went up to the air, the reel changed pitch and the sinker sailed off into the distance. Neil asked "What on earth are you doing here?" (or words to that effect) and that I had mucked up everything he had just explained. I told him that I wanted to improve my pendulum cast. "What for?" Neil replied. "That cast has gone a long way."

Over the years I have stuck with the Daiwa rods and have gone through the different styles of tournament rod. They have got thinner and lighter but are still proper fishing tools. In a more recent search for a new one, I looked at what Daiwa was promoting as their top model and it was the Air. This rod, which first appeared in Daiwa's catalogue in 2019, comes in three lengths. I was not looking for another continental so it was the two-piece multiplier versions that grabbed my attention. The catalogue didn't really give much information so I searched the web to find a stockist, but found there was no chance of seeing one locally in the Lincolnshire area.

Thankfully, I spotted in Sea Angler that Uttings had the rod in stock. Taking a blind punt, I decided to order the 14ft 2in multiplier version, which at just under £400 was a bit of a gamble. When the rod arrived (brilliant service from Uttings), the first thing that hit me was its light weight and very fine carbon hybrid tip, actually thinner than some

of my continental rods and even as thin as some of my coarse fishing gear. My first instinct was it would snap when I wound up a proper cast with a six-ounce lead weight. However, a quick shake of the rod showed it was actually surprisingly stiff. For the technically minded, Daiwa says the slim and powerful blank combines high-grade Super Volume Fibre and torque-busting X45, while V-Joint carbon technology ensures the power transfer between the two sections is smooth and seamless. The finish was excellent too, with top quality Fuji K guides and a slide-locking DPS reel seat to give users freedom of reel placement.

ON THE BEACH

Next I was off to the beach to try it out. With a five-ounce sinker and a gentle swing round, the lead weight flew off into the distance. After that I started to build up the power and was very happy with the results. Possibly not as far I would get with tournament models, but it was easy to cast and the tip came round at a nice speed. I prefer to use my reel up the rod (still a dinosaur) and have not gone down the route of many fellow anglers who put the reel at the bottom of the butt.

The first time I went fishing with it was during a match on the Lincolnshire coast. I was casting three-hook rigs with worm baits to catch whiting and dabs. The distance was fairly good at around 130 yards. The Air sat well in the rod-rest with a nice gentle bend. Soon it showed indications of a bite and the result was a 20cm dab. Bites showed up very well as I caught mainly small fish with the occasional better sample.

Throughout the year I used the rod on a regular basis. I was so impressed that I looked for another one. Luckily there were some advertised on an eBay site and I got the 13ft 6in multiplier version

at a very good price. This model is, of course, lighter and felt slightly softer but, again, it was a lovely fishing rod.

Into the warmer months of last summer and it was time for smoothhounds, which I thought would provide a proper test for the Air. It had performed well when I caught a few smaller ones, but one summer evening on the Lincolnshire coast I hooked a 15-pounder which fought hard. The tip bent into the fish but there was plenty in reserve. The rod really cushioned the run when the fish decided to charge off.

Throughout the summer the Air coped with all that was thrown at it. The rod became the first out of the bag on my fishing trips and having two was perfect for my match fishing outings, giving me a spare with the same action.

After more than a year of use I love the Daiwa Air. The two I own are proper fishing rods and will handle most situations on clean beaches, but I don't think I would use them on rough ground. Having got used to them over time, the casting has improved and any fear that the tip might break has been dispelled. I have even used a six-ounce weight with bait without any problems. Hopefully big Neil would have approved.

If there was one thing I might change it would be the reel fitting. It's purely personal, but I swapped both of mine for versions with a trigger grip, which I find helps me to get a better grip of the reel. The rod case is very good, but I still prefer a good quality rod bag.

My next step will be to get the 15ft Continental version, which has a similar tip but is more suited to a fixed-spool reel. After all, there are times when the longer rods come into their own. The 13ft 6in and 15ft models have catalogue prices of £470 and £515 respectively. ■

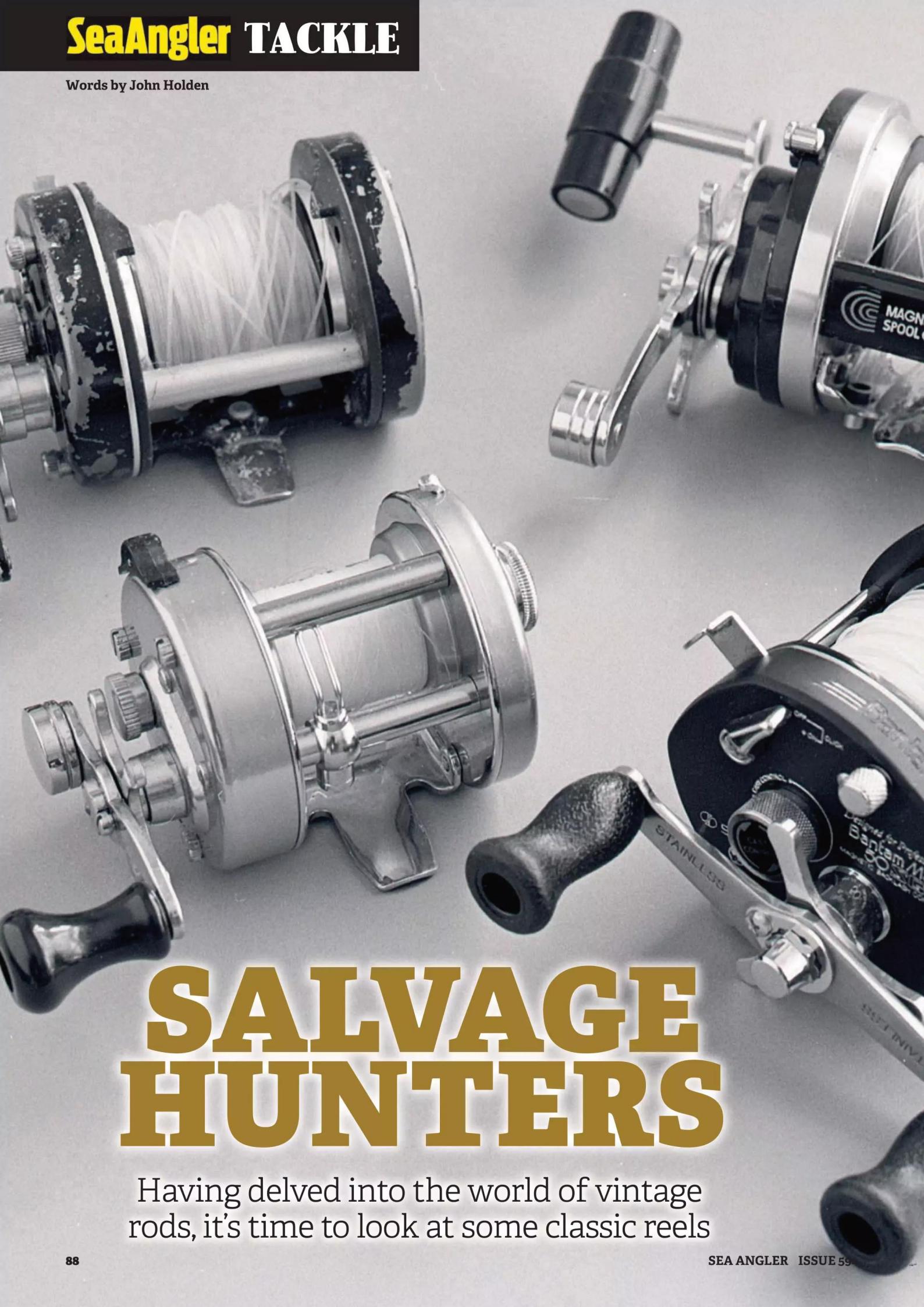
SPECIFICATIONS

DAIWA AIR SURF ARS1422MS-AU

- Length: 14ft 2in
- Casting weight: 4-8oz
- Sections: Two
- Reel type: Multiplier
- Max cast: 200 yards
- Guides: Fuji K alconite
- Handle Shrink tube
- RRP: £495

* Available from Daiwa stockists

Words by John Holden



SALVAGE HUNTERS

Having delved into the world of vintage rods, it's time to look at some classic reels



Found in a skip, this Hendryx baitcaster is a forerunner of today's casting multipliers



HERE IS A GROWING NOSTALGIA for vintage beach tackle. Once considered the realm of a handful of collectors and tackle historians, old gear is fast becoming popular with anglers too.

Why bother using old stuff when modern gear is so effortlessly efficient? It has history and character; it is more demanding in many respects and therefore more satisfying to master. Casting a long way and catching fish with stuff your dad or even your grandfather used is nostalgic and rewarding in a way that using shiny new gear isn't.

When we buy the latest reels, we are also buying into a long, slow tackle evolution with a fascinating history. Take my Hendryx baitcaster for example, which was crafted in brass in about 1895 by a Connecticut company that made ornate bird cages. The handle grip is ivory from a whale or walrus. Similar reels were turned out in millions by hundreds of American factories catering for a massively expanding freshwater bass market. My Hendryx was found in a skip.

These crude reels evolved into sophisticated baitcasters, including those developed in Kentucky by Lew Childre around 1973. He later outsourced manufacture to Shimano, which made his legendary Speed Spool BB1, now selling to collectors for more than £1,000. By the 1980s Shimano produced its own baitcasters, including my lovely Bantam Mag SG50.

Similar evolution happened in surfcasting multipliers, starting with 19th Century brass reels before morphing into Ocean City, Pflueger, Penn, Mitchell, Newell, Daiwa, Abu and today's Far Eastern brands. The closer you look, the less is really

new. Magnet control, centrifugal brakes and lever-drags date back to Victorian times. Some of the early 20th Century tournament reels had bearings working on the Bernoulli principle, the same as computer hard drives.

BEST CASTING REELS

If you fancy a go with one of the finest casting reels ever made, then look for a Hardy Silex Tournament VM made before the First World War. It is staggeringly sophisticated, and it excelled in unrestricted line events. A few similar tournament reels still exist, mostly handmade one-offs, and they all share key Silex features. Tournament VMs themselves are rarer than rare and a nice example will be £10,000.

The legendary Primo Livenais, who set a four-ounce casting record of 270 yards in 1955 used Dalmo Featherwater and Clarkson Castey multiplier reels customised by his dad, who narrowed the frames to hold a deep aluminium alloy spool just over an inch wide and with an inch and a quarter hub. Although it is a very different reel in many respects, the Silex's spool format is similar in concept. In fact, the physics behind both designs is nearly identical.

Hardy and Livenais, like many tournament casters of the late Victorian to 1950s era, rejected the wide but smallish diameter 6500-type spool format that dominates modern casting. For a brief spell in the 1970s we cut down reels for bass fishing, but not for serious casting. Did we miss a trick somewhere along the road? Some time, somewhere, somebody will pick up on this alternative spool design, and I'm confident that's when records will be broken. ►

SALVAGE HUNTERS...

THE CLASSICS

Here's John choice of some all-time great beach reels. These are collectable, still usable and many anglers yearn to own one...

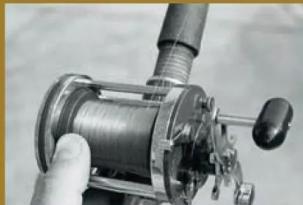
MULTIPLIERS

■ Penn Surfmaster 100 and Penn Squidder 146 – with plastic spools or, better still, Penn's L version aluminium alloy spools or the Newell custom spool. No need to reject a decent reel with the heavy brass M spool; just switch, ideally to aluminium.

Nearly all Penns can be made wider or narrower by changing seat, crossbars and spools. For example, the wide Surfmaster 200 can be converted into the narrower 100.

New spares are available for many old Penns, and, as far as I know, they can still be ordered direct from the factory.

■ Mitchell 602P and 602AP multipliers with graphite reinforced spools are solid buys. As with the Penn reels, it's easy to change spools if the reel you find has a brass one. The wider 600 model can be cut down to 602, though spools and necessary spares might be



Penn Squidder – this is the 140, but the narrower 146 casts better. A legendary reel for peanuts

harder to find, so go straight for the 602P and 602AP – same reel except the AP is quick take-apart.

■ Pre-2000 Abu, Daiwa, Shimano and similar reels qualify as vintage (so that includes the 1990 launches of the Abu 6500CT, Daiwa 7HT and Daiwa SL30SH), with prices to match. There are more than enough models to fill an encyclopaedia or to fry your brain, depending how you look at it. Find a nice one and just go for it, knowing that nearly all of them perform



Newell multipliers are collectable – they are well engineered, smooth, long casting and pretty tough



Penn 970 – has magnetic control. The smaller 10 has a magnet and level-wind. Easily converted to CT too

The venerable Mitchell 602AP – it brought John many tournament wins and literally hundredweights of hefty cod



well. Keen casters will pick the 6500 size reels. For medium/heavy fishing, Abu's 7000, 8000 and 9000 are excellent and relatively cheap, as are older Daiwa SLSH multipliers.

A major no-no concerns the original level-wind Abu 6000, 6000C, 5000C (pictured above), the smaller reels in the Abu baitcaster range and even the first Daiwa Millionaire 6HM. These and similar reels are increasingly valuable, but only if they are standard and complete with case, box, tools and manual. Converting a pristine reel for the beach is like throwing money down the drain. For practical use, find an old, converted reel or a later factory CT model.

■ If you're lucky enough to find less common multipliers, such as Penn Levelmatic, the Penn 970, Shimano Speedmaster, Newells and the rare DAM 800B, grab them.

Intrepid's Seastreak and Pirate reels, along with vintage Shakespeare, Gilfin, Woolworth and the like are slowly nudging into the collector market because of their historical value. Most are so bad that few anglers will use them. But everyone should cast

Early ABU Ambassadeurs such as the 5000C level-wind are highly collectable when pristine, standard and complete with leather case, tools, manual and box

a Seastreak just to see, feel and hear how British reel design could be so innovative yet so poorly executed. They're not called Seascreches for nothing.



A Mitchell 602AP in the hands of a young John and Ian Gillespie



Expensive when new, classic tournament fixed-spool reels from Daiwa and Shimano can be picked up quite cheaply. They're as good as modern reels

FIXED SPOOLS

Because fixed-spool reels vastly outsell multipliers on the world market, there are thousands of used ones in hundreds of different models. Massive choice and low prices mean you can afford to be choosy.

For the vintage enthusiast, some reels are more equal than others. A few are seriously collectable, but, as with multipliers, they have to be in super condition and complete.

The Daiwa Millionmax SS9000 tournament reel is a good example, as are equivalent Shimano reels. The original Alcedo reels are highly sought after as well.

Mostly, though, we are talking Ford Focus – practical, well made, with decent performance even when pensioned off. Clean mid-range reels from Daiwa, Shimano, Penn and the like are good buys.

Personally, I like the Penn Spinfisher 750, DAM 5001, Mitchell 386 and its big brother the 486. Arriving in the UK from Spain in about 1980, Sagarra's Tarzan with the shallow spool can embarrass the latest and greatest fixed spools despite its agricultural design and engineering.



The Mitchell 486 – a worthy buy, as is the 386. Heavy but bulletproof, some have manual a pick-up



Penn Spinfisher 750 and DAM 5001 – they were top performers, despite being a touch heavy



Sagarra Tarzan – built to handle big fish, to fish at extreme range and to win tournaments as well

THE ECCENTRICS

By eccentric, I mean reels that reflect offbeat designs and ideas. Most are derived from primitive drum reels, called winches in times long past. Drum reels themselves are interesting, ranging from works of art in rosewood, mahogany and brass, to plain but functional Tufnol, an old plastic. In the UK we know these as Scarborough reels. If you think you could ride a wild bull, try a Scarborough – the ultimate test of man and casting style. Massive fun.

Revamp a drum reel so that the spool turns 90 degrees for casting, and you have a side-caster. The best known and easiest to find are Alveys from Australia, which come in many sizes and models, the most appropriate for our fishing being about six inches in diameter with a profiled spool giving smooth line flow. Best used reel down, they cast beautifully. That coupled with powerful direct drive and a decent drag make them a force to contend with for rough ground and hefty fish.

Way back we had side-casters of our own, made by Grice & Young in Christchurch. The Orlando Supreme and the smaller Minor model are framed drum reels with a forward pointing spigot. To cast, transfer the spool to the spigot so that it sits sideways and line flows fixed-spool style.

Another off-the-wall idea was the Sea Martin from Australia. It looks and casts like a fixed spool but retrieves by rotating the spool rather than using a normal bale

and rotor cup. As dinosaurs go, the Sea Martin probably takes the prize. But it is a superb reel for catching big fish, and it casts well too. Later models have plastic bodies but the originals, handmade by Clifford Martin, have cedar wood bodies – both eccentric and unique.



UKSF casters including Fred King proved that the Alvey side-casters from Australia are perfectly at home on British beaches and tournament courts. An eccentric choice, maybe, but highly efficient

WHERE TO FIND CLASSIC REELS

Apart from the occasional gem, boot sale reels tend to be rough stuff. Online auctions offer loads of choice from here and around the globe. It's a mixed bag, ranging from bad to genuinely as new complete with box. Decent reels tend to come from traders who know their subject, so prices can be a little higher.

The very best and most sought-after collectors' reels go through specialist sporting goods auction houses such as Mullock's, which has its next online fishing tackle sale in March (mullocksauctions.co.uk) or Thomas Turner (www.thomasturner.com). You could also try Jim Hudson's Vintage Fishing Tackle Company (vintagefishingtackle.co.uk/).

Social media is a fine hunting ground too, especially the fishing and casting groups. The Vintage Tackle Casting group on Facebook is full of good info, although it isn't involved in much selling. Some tackle shops usually have plenty of trade-ins on offer. ■

NEXT ISSUE
Putting vintage reels to work

BOAT STORE

A guide to new products for anglers going afloat

FEATURES GALORE IN LATEST OUTBOARDS



Sharing the DNA of the flagship XTO outboards, the new feature-rich Yamaha V6 range of motors has cutting-edge technology and engineering excellence resulting in outstanding power and performance.

By fusing power and efficiency, Yamaha says these engines set a new standard for V6 outboard performance.

Designed for use by professionals and enthusiasts to new users, the V6 range has an elegant, sleek and lightweight design. They are ideal for everyday use to long journeys, from

adrenaline moments to comfortable cruising.

Features include digital electric steering (DES) built-in to the 250hp and 300hp models equipped with steer by wire (SBW). This delivers a smoother and more intuitive driving experience, with no hydraulic systems to bleed or steering cables to snag over time. Benefits continue at the stern with a cleaner finish, with no pumps or hoses. Non-SBW V6 engines are compatible with optional bolt-on



DES or traditional hydraulic steering systems. Yamaha's Total Tilt function allows complete tilt up or down (until trim ram contact) from any position.

Thrust enhancing reverse exhaust (TERE) provides stronger reverse and low-speed manoeuvring. You can combine it with optional DES and a Helm Master EX joystick for enhanced manoeuvrability, which is very helpful around docks and confined spaces.

These engines feature a colour-matched lower unit, a new one-piece top cowling with water-draining air duct moulding, a new bottom cowling, apron shape and premium graphics.

Taken from the XTO range, the lower motor mounts are larger and softer resulting in less vibration and a softer ride.

The new 4.2-litre 300hp and 250hp V6 engines also have an improved lower unit, featuring new components and design features.

The new gear tooth profile gives improved contact and reduces surface pressure. In addition, the durability has been improved by changing the oil flow inside the lower case and the bearings that support the engine's gears.

■ For more details, visit: www.yamaha-motor.eu

APP AIMS TO BOOST AFTER-SALES SERVICE

British diesel outboard specialist, Cox Powertrain, has announced a new generation of mobile boating technology with the launch of an engine management application.

Coxswain app is the first of its kind in the marine industry and has been developed as part of the company's drive to deliver unrivalled aftersales service for its customers.

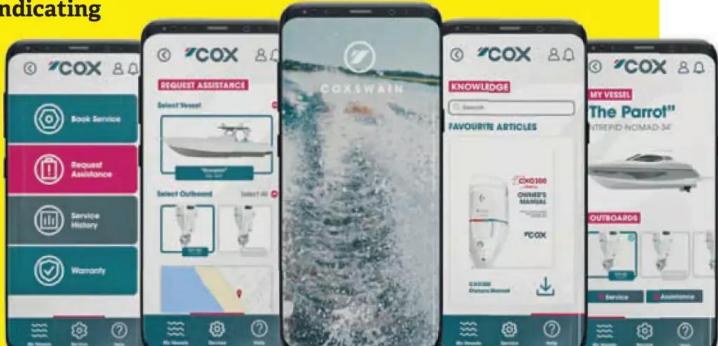
This mobile app provides a tailored experience for every Cox customer, detailing images of their specific powered vessel, along with information relating to each outboard, such as warranty, service records, serial numbers,

and maintenance information – all managed in real-time.

Being exceptionally user-friendly and easy to navigate, the app is designed to ensure customers get help when they need it. You can request support via the app, indicating your preferred dealer, and will receive a response within 30 minutes. Push notifications are sent through the app to keep customers updated on progress. The app's extensive knowledge base allows self-help for

smaller, less technical issues too. Free to download for Cox customers, it is available on desktop, smartphone, and tablet devices.

■ For more info, visit: coxmarine.com





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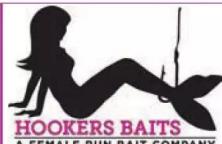
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BEN PRICE

The Welsh international and World Pairs winner recalls childhood fishing trips with a rod strapped to his bike and a dream of doing battle with a ragged-tooth shark



Victory in the first World Pairs event

WHEN I FIRST MET Ben Price I recognised his progression in the world of sea angling because it was so familiar.

Fishing with his dad and mates was exactly how many of us got into the sport before diving into the match scene. Now, the 28-year-old heating engineer from Holyhead in North Wales has seen his talent turn into an obsession, bringing with it many rewards along the way.

Q At what age did you first start fishing, and did you catch anything?

Ben Price: I started when I was seven. My dad used to take me fishing on a Sunday with my brothers and sisters to our local breakwater in Holyhead. I think he did this to get us out of my mum's hair. Growing up in Anglesey, I was extremely lucky with the number of fish to be caught really close to the shoreline. My first fish almost certainly will have been a wrasse or a small pollack.

Q Who was your biggest influence in fishing?

BP: My biggest influence is definitely my dad. He would take me fishing on a Sunday, but at night throughout the week he would fish with his friends. Being so young and due to the times they were fishing, I was never allowed to tag along. Yet most mornings after they'd been fishing, I would wake to see the catches from the night before, usually large pollack and good size cod. My dad has been my biggest support through my whole fishing career, taking me to junior and youth fish-off events and attending Home Internationals, as well as supporting me financially. Without him I would not be where I am today on or off the beach. He is definitely my best friend.

Q How did you first get into match fishing?

BP: I first started match fishing through Holyhead and District Angling Club. At the time I may have been about 11 years old and a few of my friends who were a couple of years older joined too. Again, we relied on our parents to get us to the matches and one had to stay with us for the four-

hour events for safety reasons. As with many teenagers, the buzz of fishing faded for some but being younger than the rest of my friends I remained in the club. This is when a couple of the senior anglers really started to show me how to fish and compete properly. In between club matches a few senior anglers would take me with them to open events throughout North Wales.

Q When did you win your first cap for Wales?

BP: This would have been in 2008 when the Home Internationals were being hosted by England at Samphire Hoe in Kent. I was 14 and the feeling of fishing for your country at any level is amazing. I was part of the Wales junior team that finished in silver medal position that year. Fast forward 12 years and I stood on the podium with my friend Wayne McGilloway after we won the first ever World Pairs Championships in Spain. The buzz never goes away. I've fished for the Welsh junior, youth and senior teams in Home Internationals, plus at senior level in the FIPS World Championships too. All achievements that I'm incredibly proud of.

The Wales' junior team days



Q Do you do any other fishing apart from in the sea?

BP: I have dabbled in a little bit of coarse angling, but this was more in an effort to spend time with my grandad, but it's something I don't have much interest in unless I'm with him. I do, though, have a guilty pleasure on warm summer evenings, surface fishing for carp using bread or dog biscuits. Having caught carp to 18lb 8oz, I love the excitement of seeing the fish take the bait.

Q Where is your favourite venue to fish?

BP: Definitely Holyhead Breakwater. It's the variety of ground and species on offer that is the attraction. The outer wall holds some of the roughest ground in the UK, with the inside of the harbour being clean to mixed ground. At the very end it's mixed ground with a heavy tide run. Over the years I have seen many species of fish caught here, including tiny sand smelt to double-figure smoothhounds. The venue caters for all anglers of different skill sets. It's a fantastic mark.

Q If you could only use one bait, what would it be and why?

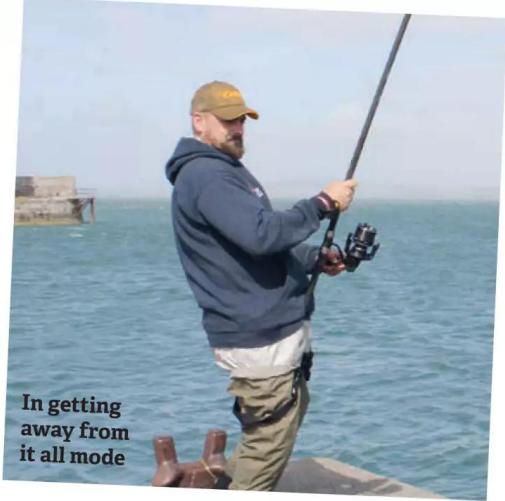
BP: That's easy, ragworms. They just seem to catch every species.

Q What are your pet hates in sea fishing?

BP: I don't have many to be honest, fishing is my escape where I try to turn off and focus on the sport, far away from work and the mundane tasks of day-to-day life. If I had to pick one it would be brand bashing, which really gets under my skin. Some anglers take pleasure in tearing down products from companies they don't like. There is not a single angling company that doesn't cater for most anglers' needs. That's why there is so many of them; we have the choice. What works for someone may not work for another, but this doesn't mean the brand needs to be tarnished. Like the old saying goes: "If you can't say something nice, it's best to say nothing at all". Oh...and tip lights with bells on, not a specific brand, all of them.

Q In your opinion, what would you say is the biggest challenge facing modern match angling?

BP: I think possibly it's the calibre of angler. It seems the attendance at many matches is decreasing. The number of top-class anglers attending is tremendous, making it far more difficult to remain consistent. The lack of younger anglers coming into the sport is worrying. This generation just doesn't seem interested



In getting away from it all mode

in outdoor activities. They are far more interested in playing on computer game consoles. I used to love meeting my mates on a Sunday morning on our bikes with our fishing rods taped to the frame and going for a day's fishing. That all seems to be a thing of the past now.

Q If you could fish anywhere in the world, where would it be?

BP: Definitely South Africa. I've been once before and would love to go back. It's the most beautiful country with fantastic shore fishing and really friendly people. Hopefully, one day in the not too distant future, I will return and try to catch a ragged-tooth shark from the beach. ■



Ben and
World Pairs
partner
Wayne
McGilloway

THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

How ear bones and DNA, as well as tagging, help to track the movement of bass

ANGLERS ARE FASCINATED BY THE idea of tracking fish as they make their way around their watery world, but this is challenging due to the dynamic nature of the sea, the uncertain movement of individuals across huge ranges, and changes in ocean habitats.

Science, however, is moving ahead, with fascinating techniques being used in addition to tagging, while others are being developed. BASS and its members have been involved in several projects and is continually looking for new ones to support.



Inserting a tag
Photo: Mike Turner/Kenny Bowes

TAGGING

Traditional tagging involves Mark-Recapture (MR) tags, which identify where the fish ends up, allowing its journey between release and



An acoustic tag and an acoustic receiver
Photo: Dr Tom Stamp

recapture to be inferred. BASS members participated in a major CEFAS (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) exercise earlier this century, tagging some 2,538 fish with T-bar tags to gain a greater understanding of bass migration, among many other things.

Of course, fish don't travel in straight lines and their journey may be more complex than can be discerned by MR tags. As a result, data storage tags and acoustic telemetry, which follow fish as they move, are being used.

Data storage tags record, on a regular basis, many parameters including the depth/pressure, temperature, tidal movements, salinity, light and magnetic field experienced by the fish. The data is used to construct tracks showing each fish's movements. Such tags were used in the C-BASS project conducted by CEFAS to look at bass movements throughout the year.

BASS was also involved in the I-BASS project, which used acoustic telemetry to discover the movements of bass in and around estuaries. This method works within a fixed area using small transmitter tags that emit a unique ping approximately every 90 seconds. The pings are then detected by receivers. Such tags negate the need to recapture fish or recover tags in order to produce data.



Bass otolith

CHEMICALS & DNA

Who would have thought that the tiny ear bones (otoliths) of a fish could reveal information about its life history? Studying the chemicals found in the otolith is an accurate way to deduce stock structures, migration patterns, spawning areas, locality of birth, nursery zones and dietary pattern, even years later.

Fish also lose DNA into their surroundings and this can be analysed to identify individual species, which allows biomonitoring of water samples without having to collect fish or larvae.



Keep up to date with
BASS through its blog on
www.ukbass.com or on
Facebook or Twitter.

TIDES FOR MARCH AND APRIL

LONDON BRIDGE *

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MARCH

1	MON	03.10	7.11	15.30	7.29
2	TUE	03.48	7.20	16.10	7.24
3	WED	04.25	7.20	16.50	7.05
4	THU	05.03	7.09	17.30	6.75
5	FRI	05.45	6.89	18.15	6.42
6	SAT	06.33	6.62	19.06	6.09
7	SUN	07.33	6.29	20.13	5.80
8	MON	08.51	6.02	21.38	5.66
9	TUE	10.18	5.99	23.09	5.83
10	WED	11.42	6.26	*** **	*** **
11	THU	00.20	6.23	12.46	6.63
12	FRI	01.12	6.55	13.35	6.86
13	SAT	01.54	6.74	14.16	6.94
14	SUN	02.31	6.86	14.53	6.96
15	MON	03.04	6.95	15.25	6.94
16	TUE	03.35	7.01	15.54	6.86
17	WED	04.04	6.97	16.21	6.72
18	THU	04.33	6.83	16.47	6.54
19	FRI	05.00	6.62	17.15	6.32
20	SAT	05.31	6.38	17.47	6.07
21	SUN	06.09	6.11	18.28	5.79
22	MON	06.57	5.82	19.24	5.50
23	TUE	08.03	5.57	20.47	5.33
24	WED	09.41	5.62	22.31	5.59
25	THU	11.02	6.04	23.43	6.09
26	FRI	*** **	*****	12.05	6.52
27	SAT	00.37	6.54	12.57	6.90
28	SUN	02.23	6.86	14.42	7.14
29	MON	03.05	7.11	15.25	7.29

30	TUE	03.45	7.31	16.06	7.35
31	WED	04.24	7.43	16.47	7.28

APRIL

1	THU	05.03	7.43	17.27	7.05
2	FRI	05.44	7.27	18.08	6.72
3	SAT	06.27	6.99	18.52	6.35
4	SUN	07.17	6.63	19.44	5.99
5	MON	08.19	6.25	20.51	5.69
6	TUE	09.38	5.99	22.20	5.58
7	WED	11.03	6.01	23.51	5.83
8	THU	*** **	*** **	12.27	6.33
9	FRI	00.59	6.26	13.27	6.67
10	SAT	01.49	6.57	14.13	6.83
11	SUN	02.29	6.74	14.51	6.86
12	MON	01.12	6.55	13.35	6.86
13	TUE	03.35	6.98	15.54	6.87
14	WED	04.06	7.06	16.22	6.86
15	THU	04.36	7.03	16.49	6.76
16	FRI	05.05	6.89	17.16	6.59
17	SAT	05.34	6.67	17.45	6.37
18	SUN	06.06	6.44	18.18	6.14
19	MON	06.44	6.21	18.57	5.88
20	TUE	07.31	5.97	19.50	5.62
21	WED	08.33	5.77	21.03	5.44
22	THU	10.02	5.79	22.45	5.60
23	FRI	11.23	6.16	*** **	*** **
24	SAT	00.03	6.09	12.28	6.61
25	SUN	01.00	6.57	13.24	6.96
26	MON	01.50	6.94	14.13	7.17
27	TUES	02.35	7.21	14.58	7.27
28	WED	03.18	7.41	15.42	7.28
29	THU	04.00	7.52	16.25	7.19
30	FRI	04.43	7.49	17.07	6.98

* TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON

Wick	-2.29	Swansea	+4.42
Lossiemouth	-2.00	Milford Haven	+4.37
Aberdeen	-0.18	Fishguard	+5.44
Stonehaven	-0.08	Aberystwyth	-6.11
Cockenzie	+0.47	Barmouth	-5.45
Berwick	+0.54	Holyhead	-3.28
Blyth	+1.46	Menai Bridge	-3.08
North Shields	+1.47	Colwyn Bay	-2.47
Hartlepool	+1.59	Southport	-2.55
Whitby	+2.20	Blackpool	-2.50
Scarborough	+2.30	Morecambe	-2.33
Filey Bay	+2.45	Barrow (Ramsden)	
Bridlington	+2.58	-2.28	
Skegness	+4.29	Whitehaven	-2.30
Hunstanton	+4.44	Kirkcudbright Bay	
Cromer	+6.56	-2.25	
Lowestoft	-4.23	Girvan	-1.51
Aldeburgh	-2.53	Ayr	-1.44
Felixstowe pier	-2.23	Lamlash	-1.45
Clacton	-2.00	Greenock	-1.19
Southend-on-Sea	-1.22	Oban	+4.12
Herne Bay	-1.24	Gairloch	+5.16
Margate	-1.52	Ullapool	+5.36
Deal	-2.38	Belfast	-2.47
Dover	-2.53	Douglas	-2.44
Dungeness	-3.05		
Eastbourne	-2.48	IRELAND	
Newhaven	-2.47	Dun Laoghaire	-2.09
Brighton	-2.51	Arklow	-4.41
Worthing	-2.36	Rossallare harbour	
Portsmouth	-2.29	+4.39	
Ryde	-2.29	Baginbun Head	+3.53
Bournemouth *	-5.09	Ballycotton	+3.45
Swanage *	-5.19	Courtmacsherry	+3.22
Portland	+4.57	Baltimore	+3.35
Torquay	+4.40	Bantry	+3.15
Dartmouth	+4.25	Fenit pier	+3.13
Plymouth	+4.05	Kilrush	+4.02
Fowey	+3.53	Galway	+3.36
Falmouth	+3.30	Clifden Bay	+3.41
Newquay	+3.32	Westport Bay	+3.57
Padstow	+3.45		
Barnstaple	+4.30	NORTHERN IRELAND	
Weston-super-Mare	+5.05	Belfast	-2.47
Cardiff (Penarth) *	+5.15	Portrush	+5.48
Barry	+5.08	Red Bay	-2.41
		Carrickfergus	-2.42

MAKE YOUR CATCH COUNT



Anglers are being urged to contribute to a national project to help inform the management of our seas

SEA ANGLERS ACROSS THE UK are being encouraged to join a citizen-science project measuring participation, catches and economic value in sea angling.

The Sea Angling Diary Project is the longest continuous study of sea angling undertaken in the UK. It allows anglers to contribute vital information so that the UK governments and angling federations are better informed in helping develop sea angling and improve marine fisheries.

The latest evidence from the Sea Angling Diary showed that in 2016/17 around 800,000 UK adults went sea angling at least once each year, producing a total economic impact of £1.5-2

billion. But knowing what anglers do and what they catch is also vital in informing how our marine environments are managed. In 2016/17 more than 100 fish species were caught, but, crucially, Diary data also showed that about 80 per cent of catches were released, providing a more accurate picture of sea angling's actual impact on marine stocks.

The Diary project involves thousands of sea anglers across the UK, but organisers want even more sea anglers to take part to improve the quality of participation, as well as catch and economic data. With sea angling now recognised in the Fisheries Act, and funding for its development a real possibility, such data has never been more important.

Anglers receive free access to a mobile app to record all their catches and photographs, as well as a fish identification guide and catch recording kit. Funded by Defra, the Scottish and Welsh governments and Northern Ireland Administration, the project is run by Substance and Cefas. It is supported by the Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, Welsh Federation of Sea Angling, Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers, and Angling Trades Association.

Adam Brown from organisers Substance said: "There is a lot in this for sea anglers – their own app and a record of their fishing. But, most importantly, it allows anglers to contribute to a vital, national citizen science project that will help inform the ongoing management of our fisheries at a critical time." ■



Cefas substance.

How do you sign up?

Visit www.seaangling.org or scan the QR code on the advert on page 33.

What will you get?

- Free mobile app and online tool.
- First 500 app users get a free waterproof phone case.
- Free fish identification guide and waterproof notebook.
- Prize draws for vouchers from the Fishing Megastore.

What do you need to do?

Record when and where you fish, and what you catch. Upload a photo if you wish. It is as important to record when you have not fished and not caught as when you have. Don't worry, detailed information about your marks and catches will not be divulged unless you choose to share them.

To find out more, and read the reports, visit www.seaangling.org or contact seaanglingdiary@substance.net.

TIME MACHINE

A look back through the archives of Britain's biggest and best sea angling magazine...



MARCH

2011

■ A charter trip out of Brighton produced 27 cod to more than 30lb. The roll of honour for the session on Ray Burn's Grey Viking included a 30lb 4oz fish for Warren Slater, 25lb for Dan Dice, 22lb for Clive Marshall and a 19lb 1oz fish for Gary Tidd. There were also 18-pounders for Dan Batchelor and Ben Waddington.



■ Kayak angler Jim Masson caught a 26lb 3oz cod while fishing only a mile off Watchet harbour, Somerset. The engineer, who normally fished the Solent area, was fishing the mark for the first time.

■ Devon angler Mark Loewy only had a few hours to spare when he headed his small boat just a mile offshore in the hope of catching some whiting but hooked a 27lb cod instead. When he finally boated the fish, he found the size 1/0 hook was only just holding in the cod's mouth.

■ Channel 4's 'Fish Fight' programmes fronted by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, had got the nation up in arms after seeing commercially caught fish being dumped in the sea.

■ Stocks of Irish Sea whiting and cod were at their lowest, while herring had made a recovery and spawning haddock were on the increase too. The verdict came from the Northern Ireland State of the Seas report.

2001

■ Brian Beardmore, of Stafford's Lynton Tavern SAC, caught pollack of 2lb 2oz and 18lb during a trip of Steve Parker's Two Rivers, out of Dartmouth, Devon.

■ Big cod sport on Scotland's famous Balcarry Rock lived up to expectations when Wearsider Richard Carr caught a 20lb 8oz fish.



The angler from Sunderland caught it on a Pennell rig baited with lugworms. There was also a 20lb 4oz cod caught by Jason Burns, of Dover, at the Kent town's breakwater.

■ A ban of global industrial trawling was being sought by the Marine Conservation Society in a bid to counteract the growing size of commercial nets. The UK-based charity was calling for a number of drastic measures to save the world's fish.

■ John Laity, from Porthleven, Cornwall, caught a 42lb 10oz conger eel on a two-hook flapper rig baited with strips of mackerel while fishing at his local Loe Bar beach.

■ Tackle shop owner Darren Braby caught a British shore record black bream from Alderney in the Channel Islands. Darren, of D+M Tackle and Sport, caught the 5lb 15oz 11dr fish at a mark on the island's south coast. The previous shore record stood at 5lb. The current record of 6lb 8oz 6dr was caught at Creux harbour, Sark, in 2001.

■ Fishing from his own boat with two friends, Andy Gunn topped the day by catching a 35lb cod as they shared a haul of 13 cod. The angler from Woolston, Hants, had launched his boat from Southampton and was fishing off the Isle of Wight.

1991

■ Dave Farley, of Dawlish, Devon, showed why the waters of the River Exe were highly rated for flounders when he caught fish of 4lb 3oz and 3lb 15oz while fishing from a small boat.



■ Barry Ford was celebrating after smashing the Scottish shore-caught record with a 63lb 8oz conger eel. The angler from Sunderland landed the big eel while fishing for cod at Balcarry Point, Dumfries & Galloway. The previous record of 45lb had been caught at Scrabster pier in 1966.

■ Roy Rogers, of Plymouth's Kingfishers SAC, thought he had broken the British boat-caught record for a pollack while fishing on Trio, skippered by Roger McDougal. It didn't quite make the weight, but at a shade under 26lb it was enough for Roy to claim the IGFA 10kg line-class record. He caught it on an artificial eel at the Eddystone.

■ Terry Butler was using his new boat rod for the first time when he caught a 29lb cod on a squid and lug cocktail. He was fishing on the charter boat Malinda, out of Rye, East Sussex.

■ A day's fishing at Chesil Beach in Dorset was rounded off in style by Christopher Black when he caught a 22lb 2oz cod. The angler from Wyke Regis caught it at 60 yards out on a fresh whiting bait.

1981

■ One of the tackle industry's best known companies had a new name from 1981. Garcia Tackle Ltd, of Southampton, whose products included Mitchell reels and Platil line, would trade as Leeda Tackle.



■ Following the formation of the Sea Anglers Match Federation, a new body called the North Wales Matchmen's Association was being formed. The inaugural meeting was chaired by Keith Roberts, of Colwyn Bay.

■ An angler who had already caught three cod over 20lb at Balcarry Point in Dumfries & Galloway, landed another of about 25lb, and then had a massive battle with another. After 20 minutes Mike Watson, from Cumbria, got it to the edge but saw his 50lb leader snap as the fish dived. Mike confirmed the line was not damaged and was brand new.

■ A catch of flatfish earned the fish of the month award for Edmund Cull, of County Cork. His session produced plaice of 6lb 4oz and 5lb 15oz, along with four soles from 2lb 4oz 8dr to 3lb 12oz.

SEA ANGLER

2021 Calendar

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